THE TECHNIQUE AND DEVELOPMENT

OF DISRAELI'S NOVELS

Dorothy Goldman

Ph.D. 1979

ORIGINAL COPY IS TIGHTLY BOUND AND TEXT IS CLOSE TO THE EDGE OF THE PAGE

ABSTRACT

This thesis reveals how Disraeli adapts and develops fictional techniques. The nature of the less complex of these is defined in Part I, using five early novels. Ch. I establishes a characteristic and recurring trio, the hero, strong woman and sage, and their changing relationships. Ch. II analyses Disraeli's use of "doubles" and symmetry. Ch. III describes his literary background with reference to the fashionable novel, psychological study and Byronic influence, and it rejects autobiographical interpretations.

Part II considers Disraeli's trilogy. Ch. IV is an analysis of the explicitly political Coningsby, laying particular emphasis on the novel's basic structure (the parallel between Coningsby and the "new" Tory party). Disraeli's incorporation of factual material in his fiction is introduced here. Ch. V. deals with the more socially concerned Sybil, extends the factual/fictional analysis and introduces Disraeli's increasing strength in embodying a novel's central theme - here in its language, in mysteries, misnamings, et al. Ch. VI treats Tancred as a failure, by virtue of its untenable central argument and fragmented style. Earlier works, Alroy and Iskander, illustrating Disraeli's previous attempts to deal with similar spiritual and racial questions, show the origins of the split between idealistic fervour and cynical mockery. Disraeli's inability to combine them in Tancred is examined.

Part III studies two novels in which the previously described techniques are perfected. Ch. VII shows that Lothair,

its argument dramatized in its structure and embodied in a characteristic vocabulary, achieves what Tancred could not, and considers Disraeli's style as especially apt for the political novel. Ch. VIII shows how Disraeli examines historical change in Endymion and dramatizes interpretations-- chance, will, destiny, et al. -- in a vocabulary which allows sincere appreciation and mocking rejection to co-exist successfully. The Conclusion brings the major techniques together and reveals their resemblance to each other.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CITATIONS FROM DISRAELI'S NOVELS

Pages references to Disraeli's novels are to the Hughenden Edition, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1881, with three exceptions:

1. All references to *Lothair* are to the Oxford English Novels Edition, ed. Vernon Bogdanor, London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

2. Certain references to material in *Vivian Grey* which Disraeli omitted from 1853-- and which is missing from the Hughenden Edition--are cited from the Young England Edition, ed. Bernard N. Langdon-Davies, London and Edinburgh: R. Brimley Johnson, 1904. Such page references are preceded by the symbol YE--*e.g.*, YE, p.258.

3. Certain references to material in *The Young Duke* which Disraeli omitted from 1853--and which is missing from the Hughenden Edition--are cited from the Centenary Edition, ed. Lucien Wolf, London: De La More Press, 1905. Such page references are preceded by the symbol C--*e.g.*, C, p.58.

Page references are placed, where possible, in the body of the text.

Small adjustments to the punctuation of quotations have been made--in the matter of single/double inverted commas, and the placement of commas and fullstops "inside" them--in conformity with the general typographical conventions of the dissertation.

PART I: EARLY NOVELS

CHAPTER ONE: THE HERO, THE STRONG WOMAN AND THE SAGE

Disraeli's novel-writing falls conveniently into three periods: the early novels, from Vivian Grey in 1826 to Venetia in 1837; the "Young England" trilogy, Coningsby, Sybil and Tancred, from 1844 to 1847; and the two novels of his old age, Lothair in 1870 and Endymion in 1880. Despite this division, the early group of novels already exercises the same talents which he would develop further in the five later novels.

Though some of Disraeli's early novels do reward individual study, they will here be considered together, primarily to reveal the origin of interests and techniques which came to fruition in his major works and which will be discussed further in later chapters.

At first sight there are three constant figures in each Disraeli novel: a young aristocratic hero seeking his fortune, at least one strong woman, and a mysterious stranger, full of gnomic wisdom. While it is true that these figures appear in nearly all Disraeli's books, they change, both in themselves and in their relative importance.

i.

The development of the hero will be best revealed by a comparison of his position in Vivian Grey, The Young Duke and Contarini Fleming. Arthur Frietzsche says that after the early novels "the hero... becomes a stock figure,"[1] but this is too simple. The young hero becomes progressively more passive. B.R. Jerman's opinion is more accurate; he says, "The central figure of each of his early... novels is the defiant, despairing wanderer.... By contrast his later heroes, Coningsby, Tancred, Lothair and Egremont do not live out their little lives as if the world depended on their finding their destinies."[2] The novels from the trilogy onwards, that is, show the hero in the process of discovering a positive understanding of the great principles on which to base his own conduct and the ordering of society, whereas earlier they do not: Vivian Grey ends with the probable death of the hero after he has lost his reputation and his love, and Contarini Fleming with the hero living in seclusion, his wife, child and father dead; Alroy is executed after deserting his God and in Venetia Cardurcis and Herbert, the joint heroes, both drown.

1. Arthur H. Frietzsche, "The Monstrous Clever Young Man": The Novelist Disraeli and His Heroes (Logan, Utah, 1959), p. 32.

2. B.R. Jerman, The Young Disraeli (London, 1960), p. 289. The original quotation runs, "The central figure of each of his early autobiographical novels is the defiant, despairing wanderer--young Dizzy himself." I have omitted the biographical bias above.

Despair, cynicism and action mark the early heroes; optimism, education, and passivity the later. As Leslie Stephen put it, "The youthful heroes of Disraeli's early novels are creative; in his later they become chiefly receptive. Vivian Grey and Contarini Fleming show their genius by insubordination; Coningsby and Tancred learn wisdom by sitting at the feet of Sidonia...."[3] Coningsby, Egremont, Lothair and Endymion are actually seen learning how to live and their future seems secure.

To begin with Vivian Grey: in Book I, Ch. VIII--originally Ch. IX and entitled "THE NEW THEORY"--Grey cynically speculates on which professional field he will enter. He dismisses the bar ("law and bad jokes till we are forty"), the services ("in peace... fit only for fools"), and the church ("the thousand and one chances against me!") (p.18). Then he makes "the Grand Discovery":

> while the influence of the millionaire is instantly felt in all classes of society, how is it that "Noble Mind" so often leaves us unknown and unhonoured?... Oh, yes! to rule men, we must <u>be</u> men.... Even in the same spirit, I would explain Jove's terrestial visitings. For, to govern man, even the god appeared to feel as a man; and sometimes as a beast, was apparently influenced by their vilest passions. Mankind, then, is my great game.
>
> At this moment, how many a powerful noble wants only wit to be a Minister; and what wants Vivian Grey

3. Leslie Stephen, "Disraeli's Novels," <u>Hours in a Library</u>, New Ed. (London, 1892), II.112.

> to attain the same end? That noble's influence. When two persons can so materially assist each other, why are they not brought together? (pp.18-9)

In the later books, however, as in Disraeli's connection with the Young England group, it is not such young men, but the older generation of entrenched landowners who are cynically misusing their political power; as the very name of Disraeli's political group suggests, it was the young men who were to return the old to a sense of their duties. In the 1853 preface to Vivian Grey Disraeli says, "Books written by boys (1825-6), which pretend to give a picture of the manners, and to deal in knowledge of human nature, must necessarily be founded on affectation. They can be, at the best, but the results of imagination, acting upon knowledge not acquired by experience." Perhaps, given his later more idealized view of political aspirations, he was thinking as much of his earlier affected cynicism as he was of the adolescent posturing of parts of the novel.

In Vivian Grey Disraeli attempts to protect his hero by attacking the circles in which he moved: "I conceived the character of a youth of great talents, whose mind had been corrupted as the minds of many of our youth had been, by the artificial age in which he lived. The age was not less corrupted than the being it had generated. In his whole career he was to be pitied" (YE, p. 258).[4] The more Disraeli attacks this

4. Similarly, in Contarini Fleming the hero discusses the effect on him of writing his novel Manstein: "'In depicting the scenes of society in which my hero was forced to move, I suddenly dashed, not only into slashing satire, but even into malignant personality. All the bitterness of my heart, occasioned by my wretched existence among their false circles, found its full vent'" (p.169).

"age," the clearer will his way be to the development of the youthful idealism of the later novels. This attack is present even in Vivian Grey, which contains Disraeli's most cynical young man. As Leon Vincent noted, "Disraeli is thought to be a flatterer of the aristocratic world. He did not begin by taking that attitude; a stranger herd of cattle than those he has collected at the Château Desir one has seldom seen."[5]

It may appear difficult to argue that The Young Duke--published in 1831, four years after The Sequel to Vivian Grey --displays a development from cynical youth to idealised youth, when without doubt Disraeli is even more openly critical of his protagonist in this book. "[H]e was flung forth...," Disraeli writes, "to corrupt the society of which he was the brightest ornament" (p.16), and later, "From this hour he delivered himself up to a sublime selfishness. With all his passions and all his profusion, a callousness crept over his heart. His sympathy for those he believed his inferiors and his vassals was slight" (p.34). On another occasion we are told of "ducal orgies" (p.135). The young Duke clearly - at least it is clear in the original, unrevised edition - has an affair with Lady Aphrodite Grafton, a woman of previously irreproachable purity, who later, at his neglect, destroys her position completely by eloping with M. de Whiskerburg. While continuing

5. Leon H. Vincent, Dandies and Men of Letters (London, 1914), p.264.

this liasion and proposing to May Dacre (twice), the Duke maintains a singer, the Bird of Paradise. He squanders most of his fortune and loses £100,000 at gambling.

Yet Disraeli makes the Duke's ultimate redemption seem possible. Firstly, he uses the narrator's personal musing to explain the hero's position. (This will be discussed later.) Secondly, towards the end of the novel, Disraeli provides the Duke with positive actions to perform, in his financial economies and an appearance in the House of Lords to speak (brilliantly, of course) in favour of Catholic Emancipation. As Sheila M. Smith says, "The improbable tale has a controlling theme important in his later novels - a wealthy young aristocrat's gradual acceptance of responsibility to society."[6] Thirdly, Disraeli uses the same method that he did in Vivian Grey - he paints the society in which the Duke moves as even worse than the hero. The Duke's other friends include (in the original edition) "two ladies, who, by courtesy, if by no other right, bore the titles of Lady Squib and Mrs. Annesley" (C, p.255). The Duke's treatment of Lady Aphrodite appears less dishonourable when compared to that of her husband: Sir Lucius Grafton and Mrs. Dallington Vere - who, it is hinted, have previously been lovers - conspire to encourage the Duke's affair with Lady Aphrodite so that Sir Lucius can divorce Lady Aphrodite and marry May Dacre.

6. Sheila M. Smith, "Mid-Victorian Novelists," in Arthur Pollard, ed., The Victorians (London, 1969), p.199.

I do not think it likely that such attacks on fashionable life were occasioned by moral fervour on Disraeli's part. Another fashionable novelist, Bulwer Lytton was to write:

> Few writers ever produced so great an effect on the political spirit of their generation as some of these novelists, who, without any other merit, unconsciously exposed the falsehood, the hypocrisy, the arrogant and vulgar insolence of patrician life. Read by all classes... these works could not but engender a mingled indignation and disgust as the parade of frivolity, the ridiculous disdain of truth, nature, and mankind, the self-consequence and absurdity, which falsely or truly, they exhibited as a picture of aristocratic society.[7]

Though Disraeli may well have responded to this indignation, whether he felt such revulsion is doubtful. His own movement away from the merely fashionable novel may be revealed by a comment in The Young Duke:

> It is said that the conduct of refined society, in a literary point of view, is, on the whole, productive but of slight interest; that all we can aspire to is, to trace a brilliant picture of brilliant manners; and that when the dance and the festival have been duly inspired by the repartee and the sarcasm, and the gem, the robe and the plume adroitly lighted up by the lamp and the lustre, our cunning is exhausted.... [However] Mankind are not more heartless because they are clothed in ermine; it is that their costume attracts us to their characters, and we stare because we find the prince or the peeress neither a conqueror nor a heroine. The great majority of human beings in a country like England glide through existence in perfect ignorance of their natures, so complicated and so controlling is the machinery of our social life! Few can break the bonds that tie them down, and struggle for self-knowledge; fewer, when the talisman is gained, can direct their illuminated energies to the purpose with which they sympathise. (pp.223-4)

7. Bulwer Lytton, England and the English (London, 1833), Book IV, Ch. II, pp.251-2.

Because the fashionable world was synonymous with the rich and powerful world, its inhabitants were able to break free from social conventions and "struggle for self-knowledge," and a few of them might even achieve the goals which self-knowledge would set. In Henrietta Temple Disraeli suggests what is necessary to depict such a struggle within the world of the fashionable novel:

> "I do not despise the talent which describes so vividly a dinner and a ball," said Miss Temple. "As far as it goes it is very amusing, but it should be combined with higher materials. In a fine novel, manners should be observed, and morals should be sustained; we require thought and passion, as well as costume...." (p.367)

How "thought and passion" contribute to the self-knowledge of a young man free to indulge himself in such a pursuit is an accurate description of Contarini Fleming.

Contarini Fleming: A Psychological Romance was published in 1832, and, as its subtitle suggests, has as its centre of interest the mind of the hero. Essentially his is a self divided between his inheritance from his dead Italian mother and his Nordic father, between his love of the creative life and his need for public acclaim. Its basic form is the same as Vivian Grey, though the early part of the hero's life is considered in much more detail: childhood at home and school, early ambitions and escapades, some political success, a love affair during European wanderings, distress at its conclusion and further journeyings.[8] Contarini Fleming ends inconclusively

8. Disraeli acknowledged that after the death of Contarini's wife there was "a great lack of incident.... It is all reflection and description." Letter of 16 August 1874, in Zetland, ed., The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield, 1873-75 (London, 1929), I.136.

in Italy:

> Here let me pass my life in the study and the creation of the beautiful. Such is my desire; but whether it will be my career is, I feel, doubtful. My interest in the happiness of my race is too keen to permit me for a moment to be blind to the storms that lour on the horizon of society. Perchance also the political regeneration of the country to which I am devoted may not be distant, and in that great work I am resolved to participate. (p.372)

Thus he remains in that same dichotomy that was his from the start, his future uncertain. The hero's future at the conclusion of Vivian Grey was even more uncertain, since one does not even know if he is dead or alive: "Vivian's horse, with a maddened snort, dashed down the hill; his master, senseless, clung to his neck; the frantic animal was past all government; he stood upright in the air, flung his rider, and fell dead! Here leave we Vivian!" (p.486). Richard Levine comments:

> When asked, years later, what happened to Vivian, Disraeli answered "there was no inquest; Vivian Grey still lives." The response stands as one of Disraeli's best, but its real significance is not to be found on its literal level. Vivian Grey lived on for in him we perceive the embryonic stage of the Disraelian hero.... [T]he impetus towards an undefined, perhaps unconscious, heroic motif is found in Vivian Grey and in other early novels.[9]

This "heroic motif," visible in only the first part of Vivian Grey, is developed further in Contarini Fleming. After Vivian Grey's disgrace in England, his experiences in Europe do not reveal him in an heroic light. Though his developing character

9. Richard A. Levine, Benjamin Disraeli (New York, 1968), p.33.

is revealed to the reader in many ways one does not sense that he will mature into a leader of men. In The Young Duke it is the relationship between early wildness and later maturity that is considered, but in Contarini Fleming Disraeli extends his character analysis backwards to the youth, childhood and even spiritual inheritance of his hero.

The analysis of Contarini Fleming's character is central to the novel and is brilliantly done. It is largely achieved by breaking the character down into its various components - a technique which constituted the backbone of Disraeli's method: "I have been indebted for this record to the power of a faithful and analytic memory, and not to an early indulgence in the habits of introspections" (p.22, my underlining). In the early chapters that deal with Fleming's childhood, Disraeli maintains a division between the actual events of his life - his tantrums, jealousies, and early loves - and his spiritual life, in which his response to beauty is paramount:

> To me the garden was not a piece of earth belonging to my aunt, but a fine world.... The terrace was a vast desert... mazy walks... an unexplored forest fit for a true knight... and my companion was a faithful esquire.... Thus glided many a day in unconscious and creative reverie; but sometimes... the power of imagination grew weak....
>
> But I would not quit this delicious world without an effort, and I invented a new mode of mingling in its life. I reclined beneath a shady tree, and I covered my eyes with my little hand, and I tried to shut out the garish light that seemed to destroy the visions which were ever flitting before me. They came in their beauty, obedient to my call; and I wandered in strange countries, and achieved many noble acts, and said many noble words; and the beings with whom I acted were palpable as myself....

> "Contarini! Contarini!" a voice sounded from the house, and all the sweet visions rushed away like singing-birds scared out of a tree. I was no longer a brave knight; I was a child. (pp.8-9)

Such romantic visions persist throughout Fleming's childhood, always of a type far divorced from reality, and most of his subsequent escapades can be seen as his abortive attempts to put them into practice. In Book I, Ch. XV, after running away from school, he meets travelling players who seem at first to answer all his requirements for the romantic life, but once he has been made tipsy and his money stolen he becomes "convinced of the triumph of experience over imagination" (p.79). After this adventure Fleming is initiated into society under his father's tutelage. Richard Levine notes:

> Disraeli's analysis of the wasted young aristocrat also continues in this novel. Between the time that Contarini first meets Winter and the young man departs for the university a striking change occurs in him. From an innocent, unaffected, fresh boy, Contarini is made to fit into the pattern of the young Duke's peers... "at the age of fifteen I had unexpectedly become one of the most affected, conceited, and intolerable atoms that ever peopled the sunbeam of society." [10]

While Levine is right to recognise the initiation as part of a pattern of social criticism, it is also useful to see it in relation to the overall structure of the novel. The first escapade away from home has been succeeded by the first period in which Fleming comes into society, guided by his father: the sequence will recur with widening scope, illustrating the two

10. Levine, p.114. The quotation is on p.114 of Contarini Fleming.

extremes of Fleming's nature, as the book progresses.[11]

The two sides are clearly apparent in Book Two where Fleming again runs away in an attempt to put his fantasies into practice, then returns home to the influence of "real" life in the figure of his father. In Ch. II, Fleming and his friends form the Secret Union for the Amelioration of Society, but by Ch. III they are in a ruined castle in a forest and have become "a corps of bandits, and their philosophical president was voted their captain" (p.131). They scour the countryside until the news of "a strong party of police and military" (p.136) coming to apprehend them arouses in Fleming's followers the reaction, "'we are only a parcel of boys, and did it out of fun'" (p.138). When all have safely dispersed to their homes, Fleming solaces himself thus; "Deprived of my castle and my followers, I fled to my ideal world for refuge. There I found them, a forest far wilder and more extensive, a castle far more picturesque and awful, a band infinitely more courageous and more true. My imagination supported me under my whelming mortification" (p.140). Significantly he continues his fantasy by writing a romanticized version of this event, in itself a romance, as his first tragedy.

In a predictable swing of the pendulum, Fleming next devotes himself to the real world of politics, becoming his

11. The contrast between fantasy and realism revealed here as early as 1832 was to be a central concern of Disraeli's. In a later discussion of his characteristic style I will show that at its best it is a balance between the romantic and the prosaic, the fantastic and mockery. What in Contarini Fleming is the dual subject matter, becomes the dual mode of all his later work.

father's assistant, intriguing successfully to get him made Prime Minister, and managing to break the deadlock of an international conference to the benefit of his own country. During this period, however, the artistic side of his nature is not dead; having been revived by the presence of Christina, his first love, he dreams that

> a form rose before me in the depth of the dull night, and that form was myself. That form was myself, yet also another. I beheld a youth, who, like me, had stifled the breathing forms of his creation, who, like me, in the cold wilderness of the world, looked back with a mournful glance at the bright gates of the sweet garden of fancy he had forfeited.... I beheld, seated upon a glorious throne on a pround Acropolis, one to whom a surrounding and enthusiastic people offered a laurel crown.... Was it the strange youth or was it, indeed, myself? (p.167)

This youth is Fleming as he could be were he to commit himself to the creative life. After this vision, in the very garden that had witnessed his earliest imaginings, Fleming writes Manstein. Though its completion is a continuation of his fantasy life, he is brought back to the real world by the novel's success and the criticism directed at it. Yet he decides to run away again, even further this time. Though sent by his father to the Legation in Paris, he decides he must see Venice, his mother's native city, which represents for him the life of the spirit. Here in the third part of the novel the third and major acting out of his fantasies begins. It consists of the wooing and marrying of his cousin Alceste Contarini, accomplished despite her engagement to Count Grimani and her having secretly devoted herself "to the cloister" (p.236).

After Contarini Fleming Disraeli never again put a psychological study at the centre of his works, though he still occasionally produced a fine and complex character - Lady Annabel Herbert in Venetia, or Lord Monmouth in Coningsby for example. His central characters became more bland as he used them as vehicles for ideas. Although Venetia considers the soul of the poet as much as Contarini Fleming does, it is the abstract idea of romanticism which predominates, not one man's struggle, and this is a significant development for Disraeli because it points the way that his novels were to progress. To comprehend fully such a phenomenon, Venetia has to include two heroes, each reflecting aspects of romanticism; Coningsby, Egremond and Tancred have even less choice, because their lives must follow the courses which will best illumine the political, social, or religious concern with which they deal. Finally in his last novel Disraeli has a hero whose very passivity in the face of destiny constitutes part of the very argument of the book.

ii.

"In tracing the course of the Disraeli-hero through the nine novels from Vivian Grey to Tancred," writes Frietzsche, "we cannot fail to note two parallel phenomena - the increasing passivity of the hero... and the increasing importance of the

female characters, particularly the heroines."[12] The women become not only more important, but more forceful. Sybil, for instance, is the equal of Egremont, and Eva much more forceful than Tancred. Even in the early novels the seeds of this later development are present. A brief look at Mrs. Felix Lorraine from Coningsby and Katherine Grandison from Henrietta Temple will show how they use their power for evil and good respectively, but the most important strong woman from the early novels is Lady Annabel Herbert in Venetia.

Mrs. Felix Lorraine is Vivian Grey's counterpart; he himself points out the comparison:

> I once imagined that I was using this woman for my purpose. Is it possible that ought of good can come to one who is forced to make use of such evil instruments as these? A horrible thought sometimes comes over my spirit. I fancy, that in this mysterious foreigner, that in this woman, I have met a kind of double of myself. The same wonderful knowledge of the human mind... the same miraculous management which has brought us both under the same roof: yet do I find her the most abandoned of all beings; a creature guilty of that which, even in this guilty age, I thought was obsolete. And is it possible that I am like her? (p.105; my underlining)

This comparison prefigures the end of the first part of Vivian Grey. What had occasioned Grey's horror in the quotation above is the realization that Mrs. Lorraine had tried to poison him; yet later, when he himself has occasioned her death and she has "dropped like a bird shot on the wing... his countenance

12. Frietzsche, p.50. "There are no insipid, middle-class ladies, adoring and submissive, in his novels." Smith, p.209.

could not have been more triumphant" (p.154). What M.W. Rosa calls "The tendency to self-analysis and confession displayed in Vivian Grey"[13] exists only partially in the hero's self-questioning; it reaches one of its most extreme forms in the figure of his "double." Mrs. Lorraine embodies the evil to which Grey can be tempted.

Henrietta Temple, Disraeli's last fashionable novel, was published in 1836. In it the resolution of the plot is achieved by a woman, Katherine Grandison, who has to bring about two broken engagements before the "right" couples can marry. Robert O'Kell writes that "the happy resolution... is made possible by the hero's passivity," and that this "passivity is... used to begin the resolution of the hero's emotional dilemma."[14] In other words, as Frietzsche noted, the growing strength of Disraeli's heroines runs parallel to the decline of the heroes'. The complexity of portrayal of the latter is maintained through placing the conflicting elements outside the hero: instead of the internal conflict in which Contarini Fleming tries to find an acceptable way of life, one increasingly finds Disraeli's passive hero being surrounded by external influences from which he must choose. The parallel development, seen here beginning in Henrietta Temple, is that the external influences will be represented by strong women. In The Wondrous Tale of Alroy (1833), the respective futures forseen for Alroy by his sister Miriam and his wife Schirene are part of this pattern,

13. M.W. Rosa, The Silver-Fork School, Novels of Fashion Preceding "Vanity Fair" (New York, 1936), p.80.

14. Robert O'Kell, "The Autobiographical Nature of Disraeli's Early Fiction," Nineteenth Century Fiction, Vol. 31 (1976), pp. 277, 279.

and they are most clearly opposed towards the end of the novel when Alroy is held captive, and of necessity inactive.

In Venetia (1837), the use of power which Katherine Grandison revealed is present, but reversed. Here the more significant figure of Lady Annabel Herbert is the instigator of most of the action by her refusal to be reconciled to her husband, Marmion Herbert, and to allow her daughter Venetia to marry Lord Cardurcis. The constant movement in Venetia between the behaviour of the two generations means that a complex interpretation of Lady Annabel is always available to the reader. Her attitudes as a mother (denying or accepting Cardurcis as Venetia's suitor) run parallel to her attitudes as a wife (remaining estranged from, or being reconciled with Herbert). As a mother her actions can seem protective or restrictive, generous or cruel; as a wife she can seem deserted or deserting, sensitive or Philistine. She is the active force in both stories and the book reflects changing emotions towards her. Although Lady Annabel remains sincere in her beliefs throughout the novel, the beliefs themselves change, and her presentation is an important pointer to the way in which sincere, positive women will come to represent different philosophies from which the hero must choose.

Firstly, Lady Annabel is seen as a mother who can do no wrong: not only to Venetia, but to the orphaned Cardurcis. It is only slowly that the reader realizes what effect her behaviour may be having on her daughter, whose desire to know of her father, and need for companionship are so thwarted that she becomes ill: "From the last departure of Lord Cardurcis

from Cherbury, the health of Venetia again declined. The truth is, she brooded in solitude over her strange lot, until her nerves became relaxed by intense reverie and suppressed feeling" (p.224). When Lady Annabel snubs Bishop Masham for offering to lend her a copy of Cardurcis' poems, the conversation is described as having had a "somewhat sullen commencement" (p.250), an adjective unthinkable for anything connected with Lady Annabel earlier in the novel. Soon the recurring word to describe her attitude to Cardurcis is "prejudice," e.g.: "the strong prejudice which Lady Annabel now so singularly entertained against one in whose welfare she was originally so deeply interested" (pp.290-1), or "she shared none of her mother's apprehensions or her prejudices" (p.328). Venetia herself considers her mother's opinions "unjust" (p.306) and recognizes what it has done to her own position - "'I am a victim'" (p.307). As Countess Guiccioli says, "Lady Annabel... becomes metamorphosed into a woman whose judgement is false, whose prejudices are great, whose principles are inexorable.... She sees Herbert in Cardurcis, and unable as she was to understand the former, so is she unequal to the task of comprehending Cardurcis."[15] Perhaps the clearest example of how her moral stature has changed comes in the contrast between the two symmetrical scenes when Cardurcis proposes marriage to her daughter. In the first, Cardurcis still has Lady Annabel's approbation and has not yet come to recognize the greatness of Marmion Herbert. After Venetia's refusal he and she part in anger when he describes her father as

15. Countess Guiccioli, My Recollections of Lord Byron (London, 1869), p.492.

> "A man whose name is synonymous with infamy, and which no one dares to breathe in civilized life; whose very blood is pollution... who has violated every tie, and derided every principle, by which society is maintained; whose life is a living illustration of his own shameless doctrines; who is, at the same time, a traitor to his king and an apostate from his God!" (p.201)

By the time of his second proposal the situation is completely reversed; while Cardurcis is rejected again, this time it is his description of her mother that causes Venetia to end the interview. He calls Lady Annabel "'The cold-blooded, sullen, selfish, inexorable tyrant!... She has no heart; she never had a feeling... the stern hypocrite!... my curse upon your mother's head!... May heaven rain all its plagues upon her, the Hecate!'" (pp.307-8). Though there is no doubt that Cardurcis has himself radically altered between these two interviews, it is more significant that the reader has been prepared, at least partially, to accept his description of Lady Annabel.

However, before the book ends, another revolution has taken place and both the younger and the older couples are reconciled. Again Lady Annabel is the only force opposing the reconciliation, so it is the fluctuations in her attitudes which are depicted in the most depth. They occur mainly in two scenes, each of which forces her one step further in self-knowledge. The first is the abortive reconciliation at Rovigo, ruined by the appearance of Herbert's mistress. Before her entrance Lady Annabel thinks that she

> had too long and too fondly schooled herself to look upon the outraged wife as the only victim. There was then, at length it appeared to this stern-minded woman, another. She had laboured in the flattering delusion that the devotion of a mother's love might compensate to Venetia for the loss of that other parent, which in some degree Lady Annabel had occasioned her... [but] there came across the mind of Lady Annabel a mortifying conviction that the devotion of her child, on which she had so rated herself, might after all only prove a subtle form of profound selfishness; and that Venetia, instead of being the idol of her love, might eventually be the martyr of her pride. And, thinking of these things, she wept. (p.360)

After Lady Annabel and her daughter leave Herbert, Venetia again becomes ill,[16] and in Book V, Ch. VIII, there is a complex scene in which she and her mother discuss their abrupt departure from Rovigo. They are entirely at cross purposes.[17] Lady Annabel, having blamed her husband and his unexpected appearance for Venetia's illness, eventually reaches the position of considering a future reconciliation with him if only to save Venetia's life - "'We quitted, perhaps, Rovigo too hastily,' said Lady Annabel, in a choking voice, and with a face of scarlet. It was a terrible struggle, but the words were uttered" (p.377). Venetia, however, has schooled herself to

16. Disraeli uses the recurrence and degree of his heroine's malaise to chart her emotional progress: "The same cause, indeed, which during the last five years had at intervals so seriously menaced the existence of this unhappy girl, was now at work with renovated and even irresistible influence" (p.369).

17. It is interesting that Disraeli should build such an important scene around a misunderstanding: by these means aspects of the conflict are realized which could not otherwise be brought into conjunction. Later in Tancred the hero leads the Ansarey into battle when he is committed to the success of the opposing forces, and Lothair is claimed as a hero by two warring factions. These two later episodes may have their origin in this scene in Venetia.

believe that Herbert's ties to his mistress are such that he would neither wish nor be able to join them, whatever her mother's attitude.

> "No, mother," said Venetia, to Lady Annabel's inexpressible surprise, "we did right to go." "Even my child, even Venetia, with all her devotion to him, feels the absolute necessity of my conduct," thought Lady Annabel. Her pride returned; she felt the impossibility of making an overture to Herbert; she looked upon their daughter as the last victim of his fatal career. (Ibid.)

However in the recognition of the possibly awful consequences to her daughter of her own attitude to the father lies the seed of her future acquiescence in their life together. Although the reader is not permitted to witness the actual reconciliation, it has been preceded by a discussion between Venetia and Lady Annabel in which the latter regains all the moral position she had lost, by her new willingness to give up her daughter, to free her to rejoin her father:

> "I am persuaded that the presence of your father is necessary to your happiness; nay, more, to your life.... Be happy, then, my daughter, and live. Fly to your father, and be to him as matchless a child as you have been to me." She uttered these last words in a choking voice. (p.386)

However, the complexity of Lady Annabel's character, her changing attitudes and the book's own attitude to her, are not merely the result of the novel's structure, nor only a fine psychological study. It is also the means by which a discussion of the conflicting claims of romantic imagination and conservative duty can be introduced, a version of the conflict in Contarini Fleming. This political and cultural

question runs parallel to the personal one, since it is because of Cardurcis' conversion to Herbert's beliefs that Lady Annabel rejects him as a suitor for her daughter. To begin with he is entirely acceptable to her:

> "You have no idea... how right his opinions seem to be on every subject. He has been brought up in a good school.... He is quite loyal and orthodox in all his opinions; ready to risk his life for our blessed constitution in Church and State.... It is delightful for me to see him turn out so well!" (p.172)

Yet, after his espousal of the most liberal principles their antipathy is mutual. He reflects on their former friendship:

> with her he had passed his prejudiced youth, and fancied, like an idiot, that he had found sympathy! Yes, so long as he was a slave, a mechanical, submissive slave, bowing his mind to all the traditionary bigotry which she adored, never daring to form an opinion for himself, worshipping her idol, custom, and labouring by habitual hypocrisy to perpetuate the delusions of all around her! (p.267)

Especially is imagination her enemy--whether employed poetically or to reconsider political principles: Lady Annabel "looked upon Cardurcis as a lost man. With her, indeed, since her marriage, an imaginative mind had become an object of terror" (p.268).

Yet, as we have seen, Lady Annabel regains her position as moral arbiter, as she regains her husband. Disraeli does not hesitate to allow events to assist her. Cardurcis is as condemned for his affair with Lady Mounteagle, as Herbert is on being discovered to have an Italian mistress. Both men leave England in disgrace. The wanderings of both men convince them of the importance of domestic ties. Perhaps more importantly Lady Annabel's eventual acceptance of Cardurcis as Venetia's

suitor carries the emotional weight of her acceptance of Herbert.

"The society /Disraeli/ painted is, on the whole, that of honest husbands and true wives, pure maidens and ingenuous lads," wrote Frederick Harrison in 1870.[18] In the later novels the "bad" women become less villainous. There are few like Mrs. Felix Lorraine, or the demi-mondaines of The Young Duke - perhaps the last is Lucretia Colonna in Coningsby. More often than not, where there are several women in a novel they represent possible futures for the hero; some of the paths may be wrong for him, but more often than not the women themselves are sincere; increasingly the author treats them with humour. Lady Constance Rawleigh in Tancred, Lady St. Jerome in Lothair, and Zenobia and Lady Hainault in Endymion, all hold sincere views, but none can be taken too seriously. The transitional work is Venetia where Lady Annabel Herbert is both good and bad, while being equally sincere throughout. Increasingly the women become more active principally because they are confident in their knowledge; they become more so in proportion as the heroes become less so.

18. F. Harrison, "The Romance of the Peerage," Fortnightly Review, Vol. XIII, 13 June 1870, p.657.

iii.

Another figure takes a hand in the hero's education, the third characteristic Disraelian figure, who has been variously described as the Sage, the Mentor, and the mysterious stranger. Paul Bloomfield says, "If the archetypal hero gradually became toned down, it was the other way round with the Mentor or Sage, for the progress from Mr. Grey to the Sidonia of the later novels was steeply upwards."[19] The lineage of this character can be fairly easily traced: but its original in Vivian Grey is not Mr. Grey, as Bloomfield asserts, but Beckendorff.

If the first part of Vivian Grey shows the hero as a political intriguer, the second part, The Sequel to Vivian Grey, shows him as an observer of politics. This longer work has quite rightly been rejected as inferior by most critics - "lacking in the invention, the unity of purpose or at least a semblance of it, and even the characterization, which the original production contained."[20] It consists mainly of the adventures of a chastened Grey in the courts of Germany - the attempt to enliven them by the introduction of the "humorous" Essper George almost deals a death blow to the book. The interest that this part of the book can still arouse lies mainly in two of the adventures:

19. Paul Bloomfield, Disraeli (London, 1961), p.9.

20. Morris Edmund Speare, The Political Novel, Its Development in England and in America (New York, 1966), p.36.

that of Grey's entanglement with the gambling Baron von Konigstein and later on with the strange figure of Beckendorff, the premier of Reisenburg, a man of humble birth and the complete politician. Georg Brandes recognizes him as a figure who will recur throughout the later novels: "In him we meet for the first time in Disraeli's books with his ideal, so often met with afterwards, and most elaborately portrayed, under the name of Sidonia; a man with a 'master mind,' all sufficient to himself, and, therefore the born master of other minds."[21]

In Book VI, Ch. IV, Mr. Sievers recounts Beckendorff's history. Beckendorff had taken all real power from the aristocracy, leaving it with only the show of power, the decision-making positions being filled by the bourgeoisie. By his support of Napoleon's claims, Reisenburg was enlarged and peace maintained, and at Napoleon's downfall, by supporting Austria, Beckendorff maintained Reisenburg's position. Prosperity and peace are maintained above all else. Though there is some vocal opposition, "the people, who enjoy an impartial administration of equal laws, who have flourished, and are flourishing, under the wise and moderate rule of their new monarch, have in fact no inclination to exert themselves for the attainment of constitutional liberty in any other way than by their voices" (pp.325-6). While Grey tacitly accepts these achievements as worthy, it is the personality of the man that is most to intrigue him.

21. Georg Brandes, Lord Beaconsfield: A Study, trans. Mrs. George Sturge (London, 1880), p.71.

In Book IV, Ch. VII, during the bizarre visit which he pays with the Prince of Little Lilliput to Beckendorff, Grey has a conversation with the premier about the relative strengths of Chance and Destiny. Grey says, "'Within only these last two years my career has, in so many instances, indicated that I am not the master of my own conduct; that no longer able to resist the conviction which is hourly impressed on me, I recognise in every contingency the pre-ordination of my fate'" (p.368). Beckendorff's is a different creed: "'Man is not the creature of circumstances. Circumstances are the creatures of men. We are free agents, and man is more powerful than matter.'"[22] This may remind the reader of Grey's own original position and he himself overtly makes the comparison: "'Yours is a very bold philosophy, of which I myself was once a votary'" (p.369). The book has taken the unusual form of revealing first a young man in action, who fails, and then introducing him and the reader to a comparable figure who could have been the hero's model in that he has put the same philosophy to work and succeeded. Grey muses on this very point:

> Apparently, the philosophy on which Beckendorff had regulated his career, and by which he has arrived at his pitch of greatness, was exactly the same with which he himself, Vivian Grey, had started in life; which he had found so fatal in its consequences; which he believed to be so vain in its principles. (p.380)

22. A comparison between this and Sidonia's opinions in Coningsby reveals their similarity: "'The age does not believe in great men, because it does not possess any,' replied the stranger. 'The Spirit of the Age is the very thing that a great man changes'" (p.117).

After due consideration he is able to console himself that it is his youth that made him incapable of gaining the position that Beckendorff had. The younger man is weaker, burnt out; the older is the stronger, and still active. Without knowing the circumstances of Grey's earlier intrigues, Beckendorff tells him, "'No Minister ever yet fell but from his own inefficiency. If his downfall be occasioned, as it generally is, by the intrigues of one of his own creatures, his downfall is merited for having been the dupe of a tool which in all probability he should never have employed'" (p.370) - which most accurately describes the previous relationship of Grey and Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

In Contarini Fleming there is a more developed example of the type. Philip Guedalla identifies Peter Winter as the "enigmatic painter [who] foreshadowed the gnomic wisdom of Sidonia."[23] Contarini Fleming meets him very early in his career when Winter gives the boy advice: "'BE PATIENT: CHERISH HOPE. READ MORE: PONDER LESS. NATURE IS MORE POWERFUL THAN EDUCATION: TIME WILL DEVELOP EVERYTHING. TRUST NOT OVERMUCH IN THE BLESSED MAGDALEN; LEARN TO PROTECT YOURSELF'" (p.58). When Levine says, "In Contarini Fleming Disraeli first introduces the Sidonia-like teacher and sage, in this case the painter Peter Winter,"[24] he has like Bloomfield not paid enough attention to Beckendorff, but it is true that Winter extends the concept

23. Philip Guedalla, Idylls of the Queen (London, 1937), p.177.

24. Levine, p.47.

somewhat further. He reveals the almost mystical ability to appear whenever Fleming needs him, telling him, "' If your acquaintance be worth preserving, fate or fortune will some day bring us again together'" (p.57), an ability which will be also revealed by Sidonia.[25] Winter is critical of Fleming, of both sides of his nature, that represented by Manstein, and that which is closer to the father who "'tried to turn you into a politician'" (p.282). Winter suggests to Contarini Fleming the possibility of a synthesis of the conflicting halves of his personality - that he must discover his real nature before he can achieve a full life.

In Henrietta Temple Monypenny and Buckle discover another example: "The unimpassioned Montfort, with whom 'life was the romance of reason' as with Ferdinand it was 'the romance of imagination,' may seem at the first view artificial, but he is of the Disraelian line of Beckendorff and Winter, and interesting as the immediate precursor of Sidonia."[26] Both Frietzsche[27] and Lewis Apjohn have another candidate, however. The latter says of Glastonbury's influence on Ferdinand Armine, that the former "became his good genius throughout his life."[28] Even Dr. Masham in Venetia has been regarded as a candidate, despite the obvious humour with which he is treated. There is

25. "'If our acquaintance be worth preserving,' said the stranger, 'you may be sure it will not be lost.'" Coningsby, p.121.

26. William Flavelle Monypenny and George Earle Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (London, 1929), I.347.

27. See Arthur H. Frietzsche, Disraeli's Religion: The Treatment of Religion in Disraeli's Novels (Logan, Utah, 1961).

28. Lewis Apjohn, Memorable Men of the Nineteenth Century.II. The Earl of Beaconsfield: His Life and Work (London, 1881), p.108.

a confusion in all these cases between the sage--who always has an air of mystery, is frequently a man of power and is given to gnomic pronouncements--and the simple role of older advisor. The former is always revered by the hero, the latter's advice is often disregarded. Older advisor is surely the role of Mr. Grey in Vivian Grey, Dacre Dacre in The Young Duke who gives the hero such useful financial advice, Montfort and Glastonbury. The later extreme positions of advisor and sage may be seen in Tancred, where first the Bishop and the Man of the World are called in to advise the hero: after rejecting their advice he is helped by both Sidonia and the Angel of Arabia! This movement towards the more spiritual, even mystic advisor had, however, already begun in Alroy. Alroy, while under the tutelage of Jabaster the priest, receives advice from The Daughter of the Voice--but this is only the beginning. As Philip Rieff writes, "The fantasy at the 'Tomb of the Kings' in Jerusalem is the most remarkable in the pattern of fantasies in Disraelian fiction. Solomon incarnate appears and hands down to his descendent, David Alroy, the rod of his leadership."[29] Although Alroy ultimately rejects this assistance and makes the secular Honain his advisor, the Sage has taken a step which leads on to the Angel of Arabia in Tancred and Paraclete in Lothair.

29. Philip Rieff, "Disraeli: The Chosen of History," Commentary, Vol.13 (1952), p.30.

CHAPTER TWO: DOUBLES AND SYMMETRY

i.

Disraeli not only has a consistent repertoire of characters, but at least one consistent method of using them too. Christopher Hollis comes nearest to explaining the method, despite his unnecessary biographical additions: "his stories always tended to run to a kind of formula. They were nearly always what might be called double autobiographies. There were two main characters, both of which were Disraeli thinly disguised."[1] Hollis categorizes one as the young hero, being influenced and learning about life from the second, the stranger from the East, "obviously a second sort of Disraeli, in a way acting as a mentor to the first sort of Disraeli."[2] Disraeli does often use "doubles," though Hollis is right in saying that the doubles are the hero and the Sage on only one occasion, in Vivian Grey. Disraeli presents us throughout that novel with a series of alternatives or doubles running parallel to the central character and plot. Though the definition and development of any individual character is not deep, by comparing it and its double, the path that has and the path

1. Christopher Hollis, "Disraeli's Political Novels," in R.A. Butler and others, Tradition and Change: Nine Oxford Lectures (London, 1954), p.100.

2. Ibid.

that might have been taken, a book of greater complexity and unity than might have been expected is revealed. The contrast between Grey and Beckendorff is the principal use of doubles. As though to make clear what Grey would have been like had he succeeded, Disraeli presents us with a second character whose basic philosophy is the same (and even points out the similarity to us, as noted earlier), who has succeeded where Grey had failed, and who has brought his country peace and prosperity.

Nor indeed would Grey's transformation into a Beckendorff have necessitated shrugging off the more exotic aspects of his character - both men have strange eating habits:"'I shall be in time for the guava and liqueurs, and you know that's the only refreshment I ever take,'" (p.60) says Grey, while "'Mr. Beckendorff never takes anything after his noon meal'" (p.351).[3] Both men give recipes. While Grey's only seems ridiculous: "'TO EVERY TWO BOTTLES OF STILL CHAMPAGNE, ONE PINT OF CURAÇOA.... CATCH THE AROMA OF A POUND OF GREEN TEA, AND DASH THE WHOLE WITH GLENLIVET'" (p.27), Beckendorff, as befits his greater maturity, recognises that his recipe is nonsense and ends it, "'Mix some oil and common vinegar with a little Chili, and drown it in them. Open a large window very wide - and throw it all out!'" (YE, p.575). Similarly, it is perhaps not too fanciful to compare Beckendorff's successful keeping of birds with Grey's pretence of treating the Marchioness's green parrot and his discomfiture in discussing the fictitious

3. The supreme example of the Sage, Sidonia, has a similar eccentricity. When Coningsby, at their first meeting, invites him to share his meal, he replies, "'I thank you... but it is one of my bread days'" Coningsby, p.116.

Chowchowtow bird with the ornithologist Mr. Mackaw. A more obvious comparison is to be found in the occasion of Beckendorff's invitation to Grey and the Prince of Little Lilliput to visit him. There Grey is a spectator as Beckendorff destroys a power-seeking cabal by the promise of preferment: a group similar to the earlier one which had collapsed under Grey's own leadership, and by similar means.

If Beckendorff is a successful variant of what Grey might have become, Mrs. Felix Lorraine is a wicked variant. Significantly in the passage quoted above (see p.15) Grey actually uses the world "double" with reference to her. These two characters, Beckendorff and Mrs. Felix Lorraine, are the two extemes which Grey approaches at different times in his career. The hero can be defined and yet the question of his future development kept open, because he continues to be seen in terms of his potential, while other characters play out putting it into practice.

The perceptions of Grey's character offered by this technique are deepened by the simple method of including comparisons between his earlier reckless self and his present chastened character. Of a drinking match he thinks:

> he could not refrain from remembering the last time when he was placed in the same situation; it was when the treacherous Lord Courtown had drank success to Mr. Vivian Grey's maiden speech in a bumper of claret at the political orgies of Château Desir. Could he really be the same individual as the daring youth who then organized the crazy councils of those ambitious, imbecile grey-beards? (p.307)

The reader is then put in the position of being able to balance the simple contrast between Grey then and now and the more complex Grey-Beckendorff comparison: in the former the hero is chastened, but in the latter he recognizes that his earlier ways might not have been entirely erroneous.

In the character of the Baron von Konigstein, another example of the "double" is revealed. Like Grey he has left England in disgrace, had redeemed his character through public service and yet falls again. He is presented to us in similar terms to those which introduce Vivian Grey in Part II. Von Konigstein, on re-entering the world after his disgrace, believes "that, though not happy, I might be calm" (p.243), and Grey, "Careless of what was to come" (YE, p.262), has renounced the prospect of possible happiness for himself. They meet at Ems and join the company of Lady Madeleine Trevor and Violet Fane. The Baron had, prior to his disgrace, declared his love to the married Lady Madeleine and had it rejected; Grey in his turn declares his love to Violet Fane, but with equal frustration as she dies in his arms. This might appear a simple parallel, encouraging comparisons between the two men and their situations. However the connection between them becomes closer: Grey "found himself in love - with whom, however, was perhaps still doubtful. The image of Violet Fane had made his dreams delicious; but it must be confessed, that the eidolon sometimes smiled with the features of Lady Madeleine Trevor" (YE, p.372). Once again there are two paths which Grey might follow, characteristically illustrated by Disraeli through two women.

To love Lady Madeleine Trevor would connect him more strongly with the pattern which Baron von Konigstein's life had taken - probably downwards. After Grey and Lady Madeleine have discussed the Baron's return to gambling and even cheating, she says: "'I am convinced now, not only of his former guilt, but also that he is not changed: and that, with his accustomed talent he has been acting a part'" (p.226). Grey muses on "the image of her who was lately speaking - of her, for whom alone he now felt he must live. But what chance had he of ever gaining this glorious creature?... How he cursed himself for his foul sacrifice of his talents!" (YE, p.386). Here both the situation of loving Lady Madeleine and the repetition of the word "talent" connect Grey and von Konigstein.

The fact that the Baron is ultimately unable to shrug off the shame of his earlier behaviour in England leads us to wonder whether the same might be true of Grey. To love Violet Fane would be the behaviour of a "free" man with a new life before him. Disraeli makes the Baron von Konigstein story remain as an awful example, then stresses Grey's regenerate state by making him choose Violet Fane, but denies him the chance actually to make a new life for himself by removing her from the scene immediately after they have declared their love. This incident is later on strangely transposed to further the connection between Grey and Beckendorff. The latter looks at the mysterious picture of a woman in his drawing room: "Vivian in turn, gazed upon this singular being, and the fair pictured form which he seemed to idolize. Was he, too, unhappy? Had he, too, been bereft in the hour of his proud and perfect joy? Had he, too, lost a virgin bride?" (p.367). There is no logical

sequence of comparison and contrast here; but there is a pattern of juxtapositions which serves to illustrate the possible lives that Grey could have led and perhaps still might lead. Even when such a minor character as Miss von Spittergen recounts her life story to him, it occasions these thoughts: "His early, his insane career, flitted across his mind.... He, too, had thought himself a peculiar creature: he, too, had lived in a world of his own creation: he, too, had sacrificed himself to an idea: he, too, had looked upon his fellow-creatures as the puppets of his will" (YE, p.697). Her method of achieving peace of mind, by duty, could be available to him.

To understand how Disraeli sophisticated his use of doubles in his next novel requires an understanding of the alterations he made for the 1853 Uniform Edition of the novels, particularly to Vivian Grey and The Young Duke. In Vivian Grey some of the revisions are clearly to remove juvenile effusions which, being spoken in the voice of the author, could have proved embarrassing if attributed to the graver man who from 1851-2 had been Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House: "on looking in the glass again, I do find myself a leetle yellow under the eyes still, a twitch in the left temple, tongue like snow in a fog, a violent nausea, pulse at one hundred and ten.... Another fit of the bile, by all that's sacred" (YE, p.174), and "Not at all, my sweet questioner - I am strolling on a sunny lawn, and flanking butterflies with a tandem whip" (YE, p.222) both disappear. Some of the more obvious social errors are also

expunged, and particularly in the German section of the book many of the more boring passages are removed, such as the characters of Brinkel and Sherbourne (Book V, Ch. II). The omissions of Book VII, Chs. V, VI, and VII, with their descriptions of the Spittergens, Speilburg, Little Lintz, et al., or Book VIII, Ch. III, when Vivian Grey is overcharged at the inn, are improvements. References to drink are cut down ("CLARET, bright Claret! solace of the soul, and the heart's best friend!" (YE, p.628) disappears), and one of these drinking omissions is especially interesting. In Book II, Ch. XVII, at Vivian Grey's direction, the Marquess of Carabas has gathered under his roof all the politicians who were to be useful to him in forming the "Carabas party" and to fortify himself before addressing them, he

> dashed off a tumbler of Burgundy, and felt more courageous.... Vivian Grey was rather annoyed at seeing the Marquess's glass so frequently refilled. In fact that Marquess was drinking deep, and deep drinking was neither my Lord Carabas' weak, nor strong point, for he was neither habitually a toper, nor one who bore wine's sweet influence like a docile subject. (YE, p.127)

There soon follows an incoherent speech:

> Here the bottle passed, and the Marquess took a bumper. "My Lords and Gentlemen, when I take into consideration the nature of the various interests, of which the body politic of this great empire is regulated; (Lord Courtown, the bottle stops with you) when I observe, I repeat, this, I naturally ask myself what right, what claims, what, what, what, - I repeat, what right, these governing interests have to the influence which they possess? (Vivian, my boy, you'll find Champagne on the waiter behind you.)" (YE, p.128)

This and the subsequent references to the drunkenness of Carabas are omitted and a different speech substituted, in which he argues that

> "I am far from wishing to witness any general change, or, indeed, very wide reconstruction of the present administration.... [T]here are members of that administration whose claims to that distinction appear to me more than questionable, while at the same time there are individuals excluded... who ought no longer... to occupy a position in the background." (p.85)

What Disraeli has done by his changes is to continue to show the self-seeking nature of political life while removing its grosser aspects. Indeed in the first edition the proposal to include Cleveland in their party is clearly shown to be a result of the Marquess' drunkenness. While Blake sees the alteration in this chapter as possibly an attempt to stop the scene being regarded as a description of the revelry at John Murray's dinner table,[4] it could equally well be an attempt to remove the merely farcical from the political stage. Wendell Harris explains Disraeli's use of the world of the fashionable novel thus: "Disraeli employs the world of wealth, political power, physical beauty, and glittering social intercourse not simply because he was personally enamored with these things, but because he sees them as guarantees of the importance of the intellectual debate he wishes to stage."[5] Equally, the "importance of the intellectual debate" will be

4. See Robert Blake, Disraeli (London, 1966), p.43.

5. Wendell V. Harris, "Fiction and Metaphysics in the Nineteenth Century Novel," in R.G. Collins, ed., The Novel and Its Changing Form (Winnepeg, Canada, 1972), p.63.

furthered by sobriety.

Disraeli's heroes become more virtuous, his women more sincere and his sages more spiritual, and political topics are treated more earnestly. However, alongside these developments there is the parallel flowering of his satirical wit. At his best Disraeli maintains a balance between idealism and satire. One would like to believe that the removal of mere buffoonery shows that by 1853 Disraeli was coming to understand that his strength lay in preserving such a balance. However the nature of the revisions of The Young Duke, in which one side of a central contrast is greatly weakened, means that such an argument cannot be sustained.

Like Vivian Grey, The Young Duke was bowdlerized in its 1853 re-publication. Although Lucien Wolf suggests that this was done by Disraeli's sister Sarah[6] there seems no reason to believe that it was not done by Disraeli himself. Some of the excisions resemble those of Vivian Grey to a surprising degree, especially the effusive frivolity on the part of the narrator: "As I am now approaching a catastrophe, I will take a new pen. She - the lady, not the pen" (C, pp.24-5). While there are few social errors to remove, there is a small amount of bringing up to date in the names of the fashionable cooks and tradesmen. Whereas in Vivian Grey there was an attempt to heighten the moral tone by reducing the number of references to drink, here Disraeli attempts to make the Duke's sexual

6. Lucien Wolf, Biographical Introduction to The Young Duke, Centenary Edition (London, 1905), p.xxxix.

relationships less explicit, especially that with Lady Aphrodite Grafton.

Other excisions diminish the role of the narrator, depriving the novel of a depth of insight which had not been common in the fashionable novel, and leaving The Young Duke open to criticism as merely frivolous. Originally there was a contrast between the positions of the hero and the narrator. Monypenny and Buckle note the importance of the latter:

> The Young Duke is remarkable for its long and frequent digressions of autobiographical interest. It is dangerous indeed, as it always is in Disraeli's case, to interpret these too literally. Some of the personal touches are obviously deliberate mystifications, the pretence, for instance... that his father was a member of Parliament or... that he himself was writing the novel in Rome. In others there is probably a good deal of Byronic exaggeration. It was the fashion in those days for a clever youth to pose as the victim of despair, and though Disraeli's illness was real enough, "there certainly is a dark delight in being miserable," as he says himself in the book, and we need not suppose that he took such a hopeless view of the future as in some passages he would have us believe. [7]

Disraeli removed much of this material and as I hope to show it is mainly the loss of the Byronic musings that unbalance the editions from 1853.

It is important at this point to recognize how much the original edition contained of first person narrative. The reviewer in The Athenaeum writes:

7. Monypenny and Buckle, I.134-5.

> Of the novel itself, we apprehend, there will be found somewhat less than a volume and a half; the remaining half and the fraction is totally unconnected with it, and consists of various essays - accounts of the author's palace at Rome - his hopes - his dreams - his ability or inability to write a novel - his former reviewers - his weekly expenditure, etc. etc. [8]

Moreover, one must not forget the variety of voices that the narrator has. They vary exactly as much as the character of the young Duke himself. The narrative frivolity, whether in a political or whimsical vein, is equivalent to that immature side of the Duke's character, which identifies the hero's interests with his own. Let us take for our example that quoted by Monypenny and Buckle:

> There certainly is a dark delight in being miserable, a sort of strange satisfaction in being savage, which is uncommonly fascinating. One of the greatest pests of philosophy is, that one can no longer be sullen, and most sincerely do I regret it. To brood over misery, to flatter yourself that there is not a single being who cares for your existence and not a single circumstance to make that existence desirable: there is wild witchery in it, which we doubt whether opium can reach, and are sure that wine cannot. (pp.276-7)

This is immediately succeeded by:

> And the Duke! He soon left the uncle and nephew to their miserable speculations about the state of the poll, and took his sullen way, with the air of Ajax, to the terrace. Here he stalked along in a fierce reverie; asked why he had been born; why he did not die; why he should live, and so on. (p.277)

Though the narrator is claiming to be one step ahead of the Duke in maturity--while he "can no longer be sullen," the Duke "took his sullen way"--he is actually using his own voice and

8. W. Arnold, The Athanaeum, No. 183 (30 April 1831), p.276.

experience to illuminate that of the character. The whole passage remained in the novel after the 1853 revision, as did the following one from Book II, Ch. VII. Here the Duke is still unsated by the round of pleasure that makes up his life. As he travels to Castle . Dacre, "he revelled in delicious fancies. The young Duke built castles not only at Hauteville, but in less substantial regions" (p.80). The next sentence moves the discussion to a more abstract tone: "Reverie, in the flush of our warm youth, generally indulges in the future" (pp.80-1). Then from "our" we move to the authorial "we": "We are always anticipating the next adventure and clothe the coming heroine with a rosy tint." From this point on, the passage becomes both more cynical and more personal:

> When we advance a little on our limited journey, and an act or two of the comedy, the gayest in all probability, are over, the wizard Memory dethrones the witch Imagination, and 'tis the past on which the mind feeds in its musings.... My friends! what a blunder is youth! Ah! why does Truth light her torch but to illume the ruined temple of our existence! Ah! why do we know we are men only to be conscious of our exhausted energies! (p.81)

It is then argued that the failures of one generation give consolation to the failures of the next, and that experience is a goal worthy of achievement. But this argument is subsequently rejected, for personal reasons:

> For I am one, though young, yet old enough to know Ambition is a demon; and I fly from what I fear. And Fame has eagle wings, and yet she mounts not so high as Man's desires. When all is gained, how little then is won! And yet to gain that little how much is lost! Let us once aspire and madness follows. (p.82)

Throughout this section, until "But we are at the park gates" (p.83), which returns us to the Duke's journey, the narrator categorizes himself as having trodden the same path as the hero, recognized the error of his ways and found peace as a writer, exiled in Rome. The despair which constant striving, whether in love, society or literature, brings can thus be described before the Duke himself experiences it. The Duke's experiences in Book IV, when he tastes how bitter is success, are epitomised in a monologue:

> "I have read, and sometimes heard, of SATIETY. It must then be satiety that I feel; for I do feel more like a doomed man, than a young noble full of blood and youth.... We cannot work without a purpose and an aim. I had mine, although it was a false one, and I succeeded." (p.227)

This has been prefigured in the earlier passage, in the narrator's "When all is gained, how little then is won!" (p.82).

When the character of the narrator becomes even more prounounced and individual, and his comments on life more cynical and "Byronic," Disraeli removed them in the 1853 revision. Disraeli had reflected on the inclusion of "personal" material in Book IV, Ch. III. Discussing the prevalence of contrived plots, he says,

> A plan both good, antique, and popular, but not my way. [I] prefer trusting to the slender incidents which spring from out our common intercourse; and if these fail, and our skiff hangs fire, why, then, I moralise on great affairs, or indulge in some slight essay on my own defects. (C, p.275; my underlining)

The underlined section was itself removed in 1853, either for consistency, because in that edition there were fewer essays on the narrator's defects, or because he wished to remove even the references to what he knew would come to be regarded as his personal defects, rather than those of the narrator.

There are two major excisions of this type. The first is the whole of Chapter I of Book III. To understand what this omission does to unbalance the relationship between the Duke and the narrator, we must consider the position of the Duke at the end of Book II. His career of dissipation has not yet run its full course, but he has already had his first taste of gambling and is tiring of his present mistress when he meets, proposes to and is rejected by May Dacre:

> It is bitter to die in a foreign land.
> But bitterer far than this... is waking from our first delusion! For then we first feel the nothingness of self; that hell of sanguine spirits. All is dreary, blank, and cold....
> And so our young friend here now depreciated as much as he had before exaggerated his powers. There seemed not on the earth's face a more forlorn, a more feeble, a less estimable wretch than himself, but just now a hero. (p.118)

In the original edition, Book III then begins with a chapter that deals entirely with the narrator, in which he recounts how he unpacked a case of books and found in the loose printed papers used to protect them "a translation of the Latin and Italian poems of Milton" (C, p.144). He quotes part of it, praises the author and criticizes modern literature, "particularly since the fatal invention of Printing" (C, p.145).

Yet I think one can argue that the importance of this chapter exists more than anything else in its discussion of the relationship of youth to maturity, that relationship which is the theme of the book. Here is a central passage from the missing chapter:

> No man should read after nineteen. From thirteen to nineteen, hold your tongue, and read every thing you can lay your hands on. In this period, you may gain some acquaintance with every desirable species of written knowledge. From nineteen to twenty-two, action, action, action. Do every thing, dare every thing, imagine every thing. Fight, write, love, spout, travel, talk, feast, dress, drink. I limit you to three years, because I think that in that period a lively lad may share every passion, and because, if he do, at the end of that period he will infallibly be done up.
>
> Then to your solitude, and meditate on youth. In these words is the essence of all human wisdom. By five-and-twenty, my pupil may know all that man can attain, both of himself and his fellow-creatures. If our young gentleman live, he may chance to turn out something amusing to himself and to the world. If he die, he dies with the consolation that he has fathomed the mystery of mankind. (C, p.143).

The relegation of literature to the years from thirteen to nineteen, though perhaps tongue in cheek, is echoed in the reference to Diodati's "indifferent verses" (C, p.141), to "the mortifying truth, that no book has yet been written which does not weary" (C, p.142), and "waste paper." Even the translation of Milton which he praises has become "waste and woe-begone - this outlawed, wandering, Cain-like material" (C, p.143). The narrator's disenchantment with literature runs parallel to the hero's with life.

That literature cannot take the place of experience would be an over-simplification of a chapter which is more wide-

ranging, but, in its turn, experience is granted a three-year span, which is to be succeeded by meditation and ultimately maturity. In Book III, Ch. III (new numbering), the Duke, before he has quite completed his course of dissipation, asks himself, "had he exhausted life at two-and-twenty?... He began to suspect that he had lived too much for the world" (p.129), and in Book IV, Ch. IX, he muses,

> It was his birthday. He had completed his twenty-third year.... These annual summings up are awkward things, even to the prosperous and the happy, but to those who are the reverse, who are discontented with themselves, and find that youth melting away which they believe can alone achieve anything, I think a birthday is about the most gloomy four-and-twenty hours that ever flap their damp dull wings over melancholy man. (p.248)

However, by then, true to the schedule laid down by the narrator in the original Book III, Ch. I, he has begun his revival and asked Mr. Dacre for his assistance.

The excised chapter performs two functions, both of which encourage one to look sympathetically at the young Duke. Firstly his career of dissipation can be interpreted in a more kindly manner as "action" and secondly the narrator argues that to meditate on an active youth can explain "the essence of all human wisdom" and "the mystery of mankind," and it is in this optimistic vein that the book will end. A reading of the revised edition of The Young Duke might lead one to regard his conversion in Book V to sober conventionality as unconvincing, but in the original, the reader's attitude is already being prepared in Book III.

The second major excision is also in Book III, in Ch.

XVII (new numbering). The similarity to the original Ch. I is quite startling. Again our hero has been rejected by May Dacre - though this time more courteously - and again he is leaving her presence when the narrator intervenes with several pages of personal reminiscences, thoughts on literature, references to Byron and comments on aging. In place of the Duke's occasion of sorrow - "When men have been twice rejected, their feelings are somewhat strange; and when men feel keenly, they act violently" (C, p.241) - the narrator substitutes his own literary frustrations:

> the critics were never much my friends, which I regret, and which has occasioned me many a heart-ache.... [W]hen we are juvenals [sic], and think the world a great matter, and ourselves not altogether the most insiginficant part of it, we are but too ready to put on the gloves, and young blood is not exactly the fluid to be bullied. (C, pp.242, 244)

The narrator describes the battle for literary acclaim, but "I wash my hands of any participation in this contest" (C, p.246). He must try to remain true to his creative spirit despite "My thousand errors, my ten thousand follies, my infinite corruption" (C, p.246). He excuses himself in a manner reminiscent of that which Disraeli normally uses to excuse his fictional characters (e.g. Vivian Grey and the young Duke himself: "Born in the most artificial country in this most artificial age, was it wonderful that I imbibed its false views, and shared its fatal passions? But I rode out the storm, and found a port" (C, p.247)). The connection between this and the present and future situation of the Duke is clear, and its function is the same as the previous passage, to excuse the Duke and suggest his future redemption through the medium of the narrator's. I have argued earlier that one

of the developments in Disraeli's writing was from a cynical to an idealized description of youth, and these interposed explanations of the Duke's conduct have their part to play in this development.

In The Young Duke the narrator/double is not much further advanced on his career than the hero, but in Contarini Fleming Disraeli reverts to the pattern he had used in Vivian Grey. The hero's double is someone a generation older who has trodden an almost identical path, here Fleming's own father. Through most of the book he has seemed to represent the "public" Northern side of the hero: but the revelations of his last letter to his son show, in Apjohn's words, that "His father's agony is reproduced in the son."[9] The self-knowledge thus achieved may provide a happier future.

In the three most important early examples of the double, Vivian Grey and Beckendorff, The Young Duke and the narrator, Contarini Fleming and his father, Disraeli uses the technique in his analysis of the central character, to show both his actual development and his potential. Contarini Fleming says that he "began to think more of the individual than the species, rather of the motives of man than of his conduct. I endeavoured to make myself... perfect in the dissection of his mind" (p.263). Though this is a character, not the author speaking, Disraeli clearly recognized that psychological understanding could come through such dissection and analysis. However his interest in

9. Apjohn, p.54.

psychological interpretation began to wane as his interest in political interpretation grew. Although in the later works one can still find examples of doubles similar to those of the early works (Fakredeen and Tancred come to mind, or the Hatton brothers in Sybil), increasingly the double was put to different uses. In Coningsby the hero's own life runs parallel to and illuminates that of the "new" Tory party, and in Sybil the "two nations" both exist in Egremont, who while a member of the aristocracy assumes the character of Franklin, a member of the working class. There is also a growing tendency for the later novels to incorporate dual visions of the events they narrate. From Venetia where, by the inclusion of two couples of different generations Disraeli is able to show cause and effect simultaneously, and recalling Alroy where the footnotes attempt to provide a factual basis for the romance itself, it is not a great step to Lothair where the major crisis in the hero's life exists in three versions and their discussion embodies the novel's central dilemma, nor finally to Endymion where Myra and Endymion, though linked together by being twins, embody radically different concepts of change and thus forward the consideration of history of which the book chiefly consists.

ii

Disraeli often uses unusually symmetrical plots, where patterns are clearly apparent. In this context the use of doubles seems less artificial than it might otherwise; it

might even be one basis of the symmetry. They are certainly both the result of one of Disraeli's major strengths as a politician and as a novelist, namely analysis. Whether he wanted to examine the poetic character, or the cause of civil unrest, "I studied contrasts and groupings, and metaphysical analysis was substituted for anatomical delineation."[10] The symmetry of his novels means that characteristically they are capable of division (the two halves of Contarini Fleming's character, the relationship of Coningsby to the "new" Tory party, or the ideas represented by the three women who attract Lothair, say) and much of his later work achieves its depth and vigour from the connections he establishes between the categories. In the early novels, however, he does not attempt anything too sophisticated.

The Young Duke opens,"George Augustus Frederick, Duke of St. James, completed his twenty-first year, an event which created almost as great a sensation among the aristocracy of England as the Norman Conquest" (p.1); Book IV, Ch. X begins, "William Henry, Marquess of Marylebone, completed his twenty-first year: an event which created a greater sensation among the aristocracy of England, even, than the majority of George Augustus Frederick, Duke of St. James" (p.253). The Marquess usurps the Duke's position as the principal subject of "The Universe" and "The New World" (gossiping newspapers), so much so that "The young Duke was quite forgotten, if really young he could be longer called" (p.254). The young Duke realises, however, that the new order is also a lower order:

10. Benjamin Disraeli, Contarini Fleming, A Psychological Romance, p.266. My underlining.

"Assuredly our hero, though shelved, did not envy his successful rival. Had he been, instead of one for whom he felt a sovereign contempt, a being even more accomplished than himself, pity and not envy would have been the sentiment he would have yielded to his ascendant star" (p.255). The Marquess of Marylebone is a minor character, whose function in this instance is to present an unpleasant exaggeration of the hero, to reveal how far the Duke has come from our first introduction to him and to make him look better by the comparison. (The other principal example of symmetry in The Young Duke, the two occasions on which the narrator's and Duke's relative positions are contrasted in surprisingly similar terms, has already been discussed.)

Disraeli is quite happy to point out such patterns to us. Near the height of his dissipation the Duke has his mistress

> locked... up in his private room, and hastened to receive the compliments of his visitors. In the same apartment, among many others, he had the pleasure of meeting... Lady Aphrodite Grafton, Lady Caroline St. Maurice, and Miss Dacre, all women whom he had either promised, intended, or offered to marry. A curious situation this! (p.200)

The grouping here has no moral significance, beyond what it reflects on the Duke, but in Tancred, the two false women who tempt the hero before he meets Eva in Jerusalem, serve to reveal the shallowness of English religious life.

The most symmetrical of Disraeli's early novels is Henrietta Temple. Immediately after his engagement to Katherine Grandison, made to restore the family fortunes, Ferdinand Armine falls in love with Henrietta Temple. He is unable to break either connection, but Henrietta learns the truth, goes into a decline, and on a European tour eventually becomes engaged to Lord Montfort. In London the two engaged couples spend much time in each other's company. Katherine Grandison now aware of Armine's real love for Henrietta, privately releases him from his promise to her and resolves to bring about his marriage to Henrietta. To convince her (and indeed Lord Montfort) that Armine suffered when Henrietta left him, Katherine makes constant comments on the fact that both were ill and at the same time.[11] To Henrietta: "'You must have been so very ill in Italy, about the same time as poor Ferdinand was at Armine. Only think, how odd you should both have been so ill about the same time, and now that we should all be so intimate!'" (p.370), and to Lord Montfort:

> "It is very strange, he must have been ill at Armine, at the very same time Henrietta was ill in Italy. And I was with him in England, while you were solacing her. And now we are all friends. There seems a sort of strange destiny in our lots, does there not?" (p.387)

In this way Henrietta's own experience of sorrow is used to teach her what Armine suffered. The commentary on the symmetry of their relationships is extended when Ferdinand reproaches

11. "The various young heroes are especially susceptible to mysterious mental ailments which lay them prostrate for long periods of time.... Six weeks, it must be noted, is about par; anything less might not be dramatically effective, and anything more might be 'ostentatious.'" Frietzsche, "The Monstrous Clever Young Man," pp.14-5.

Henrietta for her engagement as she had earlier reproached him. In remorse she then mirrors Katherine Grandison's behaviour by resolving to further his marriage to Katherine. It is through the protagonist that the reader is alerted to the way in which events and characters are proliferating their patterns: "it seemed to him that, by some magical process or other, his life was acting over again, and the order of the scenes and characters had, by some strange mismanagement, got confused" (p.340). When finally the four are resolved into more appropriate pairs, Lord Montfort comments:

> "Now, my dear Armine... I am not a jot the less in love with Henrietta than before. I love her as you love Katherine.... Now Katherine really loves me as much as Henrietta loves you.... And now we shall all be related; we shall be constantly together; and we will be brother friends." (p.445)

The patterning of this essentially light-hearted romance does not provide a range of analysis, but both readers and characters are encouraged to a more charitable interpretation of the behaviour of the central characters by having so many different aspects of remorse and love revealed to them. It was this duality in the book which annoyed contemporary reviewers. The Edinburgh Review condemned Armine's double engagement: "The selfishness, dishonourable concealment, and disregard of former ties on the part of the hero, are utterly fatal to any real sympathy with the woes which his conduct accumulates upon his head. They are inconsistent with any idea of true passion."[12] But a more perceptive comment

12. Edinburgh Review, Vol. LXVI (1837), p.64.

recognizes that "The art of the narrator is now displayed in creating a moral balance between the two lovers,"[13] and it is that balance which provides what analysis of love there is.

The symmetry of Cardurcis' two proposal scenes in Venetia has already been mentioned. Over and above that, there are also two pairs of lovers: the older pair are married but separated; their daughter Venetia and her lover Cardurcis are kept apart by her mother, since Cardurcis' resemblance in character and behaviour to her estranged husband, Marmion Herbert, arouses all Lady Annabel Herbert's bitterness. The two men are clearly a pair of doubles of different generations, as in Vivian Grey and Contarini Fleming. Their relationship will be discussed later, but that between the situations of Venetia and her mother is constantly remarked, though they do not look alike: "The peasants that passed the lady and her daughter in their walks... often marvelled why so fair a mother and so fair a child should be so dissimilar, that one indeed might be compared to a starry night, and the other to a sunny day" (p.3). Lady Annabel uses her experiences to try to understand and influence her daughter's behaviour, but before long the daughter is watching over her parents' reconciliation for all the world like a mother.

Venetia thinks of her family and that of Cardurcis, "There was a mortifying resemblance... between the respective

13. Apjohn, p.114.

situations of the two families" (pp.110-1) and later, "The picture of their childhood, and of the singular sympathy of their mutual situations... called forth her tears" (p.288). But the confusion of their situations can cross the generations. When Cardurcis tries to convince Lady Annabel that he is worthy of her daughter's hand, the description takes on the tones of courtship:

> To Lady Annabel Herbert, indeed, he was not exactly what he was to others.... He had his reasons for wishing to regain his old, his natural influence, over her heart.... He had sued.... He had addressed her in those terms of tenderness which experience had led him to believe were irresistible, yet to which he seldom had recourse, for hitherto he had not been under the degrading necessity of courting. (pp.266-7)

Before the end of the novel, Lady Annabel has to forgive him, as she already had done her husband: "'Now I am again happy,' said Cardurcis; 'now we are all happy. Sweetest of friends, you have removed in a moment the bitterness of years'" (p.408). Similar language is utilized in Venetia's rejection of Lord Cardurcis when he first proposes: one of the reasons she gives is that "'I love another'" (p.200). The other is not a suitor, but the father she has never met. It is in such ways as these that the entirety of a relationship is presented. If we do not see Marmion Herbert attempting to regain Lady Annabel's favour immediately after their separation, we can see a variant on the situation, which, while overtly explaining the changing relationship between Lady Annabel and Cardurcis, covertly provides the emotional background to an understanding of her relationship with her husband.

In the trilogy there are numerous other examples of such symmetries; perhaps one quotation can suggest how easily working in terms of them came to Disraeli: "It must have been some organic law, or some fate which uses structure for its fulfilment, but again it seemed that the continuance of the great house of Montacute should depend upon the life of a single being."[14]

14. Benjamin Disraeli, Tancred, p.17.

CHAPTER THREE: THE FASHIONABLE, PSYCHOLOGICAL, BYRONIC AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DIMENSIONS

Too often Disraeli's novels have been labelled - "fashionable," "romantic," "political." This does not assist one's understanding of the work, nor does it recognize what was generically important for Disraeli, what he was to take and use in his later works.

i

When Vivian Grey appeared, the circumstances of its publication assured that it would be regarded as part of the fashionable, or "silver-fork" school of fiction: works which describe, with more or less accuracy, the behaviour, manners, clothes and belongings of fashionable society, to which their writers claim, and their readers aspire, to belong. Disraeli's novel was published by Henry Colburn, of whom Rosa notes, "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that nine-tenths of the fashionable novels bear [his] colophon."[1] A year earlier he

1. Rosa, p.vii.

had published Plumer Ward's Tremaine, or the Man of Refinement, a tremendously popular book and one of the first of the genre. "Disraeli always said," relate Monypenny and Buckle, "that he wrote Vivian Grey taking the idea from Tremaine."[2] Like Tremaine, Vivian Grey appeared anonymously and was "puffed" by its publisher as a novel by a "Society Personage." Much of the success of such works depended on the social position of their authors, which could guarantee the accuracy of the information they imparted, and when the secret of Disraeli's authorship was out, the success of Vivian Grey was over; indeed the reviews became positively virulent and descended to personal attacks on the author.

Although the writers in British journals concerned themselves more with the "fashionable" aspects of the novel, the political side was not altogether ignored by contemporary criticism. Perhaps it is significant that the reviewer who could write "The hero has no mistress but politics, and no adventures but political ones" was an American who would not be blinded by the interests of English society in the book, and the one who wrote "La carrière du roman politique est ouverte en Angleterre" was French.[3] However, it should not be thought that the inclusion of political matters within the framework of the fashionable novel was an innovation by Disraeli:

> Long before the appearance of Coningsby, writers like Ward, Hooker, Lister, Bulwer and Mrs. Gore were using political figures in their books and

2. Monypenny and Buckle, I.83.

3. William Cullen Bryant, United States Review and Literary Gazette, Vol. I (1826), pp.231-2; François Guizot, "Moeurs politiques anglaises," Revue Française, Vol.I (1828), p.61.

> accustoming readers to a political milieu. Actual political ideas are scarce.... [M]ost fashionable novels show little concern with political issues.... [T]here is no mention of anything save the lowest motives.[4]

Vivian Grey conforms to this description of the politically-tinged fashionable novel and herein lies its major difference from Disraeli's later political novels. In Vivian Grey the politics are all method and no matter, what Lucien Wolf called "the externals of politics... entirely innocent of serious political doctrine."[5] There is irony in statements like "Vivian'smorning was amply occupied in maturing with the Marquess the grand principles of the new political system: in weighing interests, in balancing connections, and settling 'what side was to be taken on the great questions!' O! politics, thou splendid juggle!" (p.43). The 'grand principles" are all in fact practical concerns. The group that Vivian Grey establishes is brought together merely to seek power, without principles or ideals. One might feel free to argue that the party has Tory connections: Vivian Grey and Cleveland begin the first chapter of Book Four by praising the Tory Gifford - "'when I call to mind the perfect and triumphant success of everything he has undertaken; the Anti-Jacobin... the Quarterly;... I hesitate before I speak of William Gifford in any other terms, or in any other spirit than those of admiration and gratitude'" (p.136); they acknowledge that though the heads of their party support Catholic Emancipation the party as a whole will oppose it, and then go on to praise Canning. But this is

4. Rosa, pp.38-41.

5. Wolf, Biographical Introduction, p.xiii.

clearly of little or no importance to the characters, nor indeed to the author.

Bernard N. Langdon-Davies, in his General Introduction to the Young England edition of four of Disraeli's novels, says, "Vivian Grey has been hitherto accepted as a mere boyish freak of clever literary bravado.... I find here... unmistakable indications of the 'Young England ideals'" (p.xi), and undoubtedly one of those ideals to be developed at much greater length, in Sybil for example, was the responsibility of the aristocracy towards their dependant tenants. Walter Sichel takes the point even further: "Disraeli's earliest novel... contains in its episode of 'Poor John Conyers' the germ of that genius sympathy with Labour which he afterwards more seriously developed."[6] The incident, which occurs in Book II, Ch. XII, concerns the coming eviction of the Conyers family from their home after the estate has changed hands and the agent of the new owners will not allow them credit. The bailiff has been and the cottage is empty but for the family, when Vivian Grey arrives. Although his heart is clearly in the right place, neither here, nor in Book II, Ch. XV, when he meets the agent, Stapylton Toad, does he openly censure the treatment of the Conyers family. Indeed he achieves the renewal of their tenure by the most abject flattery of Toad. The methods he uses are identical with those used to create "the Carabas party." There is no evidence in the novel that this episode should be considered as an example of the attitudes that would be adopted by the

6. Walter Sichel, Disraeli: A Study in Personality and Ideas (London, 1904), p. 117.

Carabas party were they to achieve power, since they have no programme but the achievement of power: as Hollis says, "There is no beginning of a hint that the party formed under the Marquess of Carabas is going to do anything good, or that it has any purpose to serve."[7] However, its inclusion in the novel does show at how early a stage Disraeli had in mind the need to consider the question of land. "It will, generally, be found that all great political questions end in the tenure of land. What is the nature of that tenure is the first question a Statesman should ask himself, when forming an opinion on public events."[8] This remark jotted down by Disraeli sometime in the early 1860s had had nearly forty years to mature.

By looking at the fashionable and political aspects of Vivian Grey together, one may begin to recognise the similarity between it and later novels. Fashionable life is of interest to Disraeli not merely for its snobbish appeal - though it had that too - but as being identical with the world of power. Guizot writes that contemporary novelists wanted to depict

> the ways of thought and life of high society... under the title of fashionable novels. Now it so happens that when they composed these works, their authors were transported, of necessity into the realms of political interests and passions... so true is it to say that in England one of the principal aspects of political life is its close link with the frivolous yet elegant manners of the upper classes.[9]

Political power resides within the frivolous world. The decision as to what was to be done with such power would be a personal

7. Hollis, p.100.

8. Helen M. Swartz and Marvin Swartz, eds., Disraeli's Reminiscences (London, 1975), p.74.

9. Guizot, p.62. Translation by R.W. Stewart, in R.W. Stewart ed., Disraeli's Novels Reviewed 1826-1868 (Metuchen, N.J., 1975), p.125.

one for each of Disraeli's heroes, but not therefore necessarily an irresponsible one.

In 1831 The Young Duke was published, though it had been completed a year earlier. It was clearly of the same genre as Vivian Grey and Lucien Wolf notes that it met with a similar reception: "The Young Duke had proved almost as great a success as Vivian Grey. Nearly the whole of the first edition was sold on the day of publication, and a month later it was stated to be still running "a triumphant course.'"[10] Edmund Gosse also noted the similarities:

> There has always been a tendency to exalt Vivian Grey at the expense of The Young Duke (1831), Disraeli's next leading permanence; and, indeed, the former has had its admirers who have preferred it to all the others in this period. The difference is, however, not so marked as might be supposed. In The Young Duke the manner is not so burlesque, but there is the same roughness of execution, combined with the same rush and fire.[11]

The externals of fashionable life - the food, gambling, entertainment, etc. - are described in as much detail and with perhaps even more gusto, utilizing more contemporary slang. The style has been much subject to criticism, beginning even prior to its publication when Lytton Bulwer advised Disraeli to cut heavily.[12] Speare says, "By the most generous application

10. Wolf, Biographical Introduction, p. xxviii.

11. Edmund Gosse, Some Diversions of a Man of Letters (London, 1919), pp.156-7.

12. But Bulwer did not dislike the narrative intrusions as did many contemporary reviewers: "The egotisms I do not object to. They are always charming, and often exceedingly touching. Moreover, the interest of the story never flags." Lytton, The Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, By His Son (London, 1883), II.319.

of literary standards, this remains - from an artistic standpoint - the poorest of Disraeli's novels."[13] Blake describes the book as "artificial, full of far-fetched witticisms, convoluted antitheses, elaborate epigrams,"[14] and Gosse characterizes the style thus: "There is particularly noticeable a kind of stylistic foppery, which is always hovering between sublimity and a giggle."[15] Though perhaps over severe, such strictures cannot be denied. Disraeli himself seemed to regard it as little more than a pot-boiler: "'It is a series of scenes,' he told his friend Meredith, 'every one of which would make the fortune of a fashionable novel: I am confident of its success, and that it will complete the corruption of the public taste.'"[16] It is noticeable that The Young Duke is not even mentioned in the General Preface to his novels that Disraeli wrote in 1870. Yet the political aspect of the novel's ending deserves more attention than that.

The hero, after nearly total dissipation, has had the right path pointed out to him by a woman, May Dacre, and because he belongs by birth to the circle which exercises power in England, he is able to do something about it, speaking in the Lords on the question of Catholic Emancipation. Though no doubt attracted to the fashionable novel by its popularity, Disraeli was able to select from it aspects which he could use

13. Speare, p.40.
14. Blake, p.57.
15. Gosse, p.157.
16. Monypenny and Buckle, I.127.

to create the political novel. If in all his writings he never changed the social milieu of his hero - those not born to greatness quickly achieve it - he came more and more to emphasize its power and less and less its fashionability. The new sources of influence in the land which progressively enter his fiction (the industrialists in Coningsby, the workers in Sybil, religious revival in Tancred, nationalism in Lothair) are not in conflict with his origins as a writer of fashionable novels, but a logical progression of the aspect of them which most interested him, power. Sheila M. Smith says that Disraeli "shows perception of how the centre of power in the evolving English society were to be formed.... [I]n his exposition of the old Toryism Disraeli finds new purpose for his scenes of high fashion."[17] Significantly, in his next novel after The Young Duke, the power is more obviously political; Contarini Fleming helps to make his father Prime Minister and himself takes part in an international conference. As late as 1844 the connection was still clear. Louis Cazamian calls Coningsby "a hybrid but original book: a political treatise, which is also a fashionable novel."[18]

ii

The connection between the fashionable novel and the psychological study arises through the notion of the aristocrat

17. Smith, p.203.

18. Louis Cazamian, The Social Novel in England, 1830-1850, trans. Martin Fido (London, 1973), p.184.

as an example to others. Disraeli lays, says William Aydelotte, "a principal emphasis on the leadership of the upper classes in improving society.... [His] frequent attacks on the higher orders do not conceal the general respect [he has] for position and authority."[19] For Marius Bewley, Disraeli "wanted to define and dramatize the responsibilities of an aristocratic ruling class in his novels and to persuade the nobility to perform its obligations."[20]

In Contarini Fleming, Disraeli attempts to discover the sources of character and motivation. The original title, A Psychological Romance (later the sub-title), states the case clearly enough. Though the novel is set in the powerful and fashionable world, its romanticism disqualifies it from being "fashionable," since one of the requisites of that type of novel is that the behaviour it describes must seem to be capable of being copied by its readers. In Contarini Fleming Disraeli considers heredity, environment, education, and vaguer concepts such as the soul of a poet. The hero is the victim of conflicting motives which he seems unable to resolve and he has to turn outside himself, to Peter Winter, and to a lesser extent, to his father, for assistance. The complexity of pscyhological delineation in Contarini Fleming is not in conflict with the growing innocence and passivity of Disraeli's heroes described earlier, but runs parallel to it. Both are examples of Disraeli trying to define the forces which mould character. In his later five novels Disraeli put these forces outside the hero, where they

19. William O. Aydelotte, "The England of Marx and Mill as Reflected in Fiction," Journal of Economic History, Vol.8 (1948), p.46.

20. Marius Bewley, "Towards Reading Disraeli," Prose (1972), p.12.

appear in the figures of strong women or Sages; in the earlier books, especially Contarini Fleming, the influences are internalized, and there are only the beginnings of external ones.

iii

Henrietta Temple is charming but slight, basically a fashionable novel. To say, however, that "Henrietta Temple and Venetia are transitional works. They follow his introspective novels and precede his political fiction"[21] is to underestimate both books. Venetia in particular is the composite picture of the Romantic, just as the parts of Coningsby add up to a political whole, and the parts of Sybil to an industrial whole. Too much effort has been limited to attempts to decide which of the two central characters, Plantagenet Cardurcis or Marmion Herbert, represents Byron, and which Shelley. Certain similarities are held to prove that Herbert is Shelley: his personal appearance, his contemporary standing with the reading public, his interest in republicanism, atheism and Platonism, the similarity of one of Herbert's poems to The Revolt of Islam and Herbert's remark, "'poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world'" (p.438).[22] To this one might add the circumstances of his death by drowning, looking oddly as though he had made no attempt to save himself. This leaves Plantagenet Cardurcis as Byron, which would seem to be supported by remarks about his diet ("He amused himself

21. Jerman, p.287.

22. See W.T.B., "Marmion Herbert," Notes and Queries, 5th Series II (29 August 1874), p.177.

by eating only biscuits, and calling for soda water" (p.211) - though perhaps this may be regarded as more representative of Disraeli's opinions about his heroes, than accurate reporting), by the inclusion of the sentence "'One morning he awoke, and found himself famous'" (p.230), by Cardurcis' affair with Lady Monteagle (doubtless modelled on Byron's relationship with Lady Caroline Lamb), and by his "writing odes to the Greeks to stir them up to revolt" (p.410).

Yet the situation is not as simple as such "identifications" suggest. Book IV, Ch. II, tells the story of Marmion Herbert with Byronic over-tones. He "sprung from one of the most illustrious families in England, became at an early age the inheritor of a great estate, to which, however, he did not succeed with the prejudices or opinions usually imbibed or professed by the class to which he belonged" (p.212). The "great world... hailed his advent with triumph" (p.216). Soon he marries Lady Annabel, but within the year, after the birth of their daughter, she "sought her father's roof, declaring that circumstances had occurred which rendered it quite impossible that she could live with Mr. Herbert any longer" (p.218). After this Herbert is "universally abused and shunned, avoided by his acquaintances, and denounced as the most depraved of men" (p.219); he soon leaves the country. While some of the subsequent events (e.g. his Generalship on the rebel side in the American War of Independence) fit the life of neither poet, the similarity of Herbert's life to that of Byron is further advanced by his being finally discovered living in Italy with an Italian

mistress.

Although some writers have conflated these identifications quite cavalierly - "Based on two characters, who share the characteristics of Byron and Shelley"[23] - the mixing of reference has given rise to even more complex explanations. Brandes calls Venetia "Shelley's daughter, Byron's fiancée," and Sichel says, "the soul of Lady Byron animates the form of Shelley's wife," [24] surmises that add little or nothing to one's understanding of the novel. Countess Guiccioli argues that Disraeli

> has given Byron two individualities. Lord Cardurcis represents Byron from his infancy to the time of his marriage, and Mr. Herbert equally represents Lord Byron from that fatal epoch till his death. The selection of two persons to represent the same character, and to allow of Byron's simply yet complex nature being better understood, was a very happy philosophical notion.[25]

Such praise for the book is later modified, however, in a passage which reflects equally Countess Guiccioli's fine comprehension of how the book works, and her personal interest in biographical, rather than fictional, truth:

> Notwithstanding the great charm of Mr. Disraeli's book... it must, however, be allowed that the real and the imaginary are too much intermingled. All the fictions of time and place, which only leave the sentiments of the real man untouched, all the double and treble characters which at times quit, and at others resume, their individuality almost as in a dream, tend to create a confusion which is prejudicial to truth.[26]

23. R.W. Stewart, Benjamin Disraeli: A List of writings by him, and writings about him, with notes (Metuchen, N.J., 1972), pp.57-8.

24. Brandes, p.151; Sichel, p.16.

25. Guiccioli, p.489.

26. Ibid, p.495; my underlining.

What has been omitted in such consideration is the extent to which the novel itself conflates the two characters and their situations. Walter Sichel talks of Disraeli's "constant habit of transferring environment and transplanting personalities to accentuate their ideal essence,"[27] which may give us a clue to the reason for such conflations. The first three books relate the childhoods of Venetia Herbert and Plantagenet Cardurcis, and in this section of the novel it is their situations that are mutually revealing. The dissection of the character of the Romantic poet really begins in Book IV. In the fourth chapter of that Book, Marmion Herbert's story is used to predict Cardurcis' future: when asked by the latter what would happen were he married to Venetia, Masham, the university tutor of both men replies, "'Why you would probably part from her in a year, as her father parted from Lady Annabel'" (p.240). In Book IV, Ch. VII, Venetia realises that Cardurcis is becoming relegated to the same position that Marmion Herbert (her father) has always had, that of a taboo subject. She finds herself unable to mention his name: "'What is it that represses me?' she asked herself. 'Is there to be another forbidden subject insensibly to arise between us?'" (p.249). By Ch. X of the same Book, she is reflecting on what she thinks of as the men's differences, and wishing them more alike:

> A great poet had become her ideal of a man. Sometimes she had sighed, when musing over her father and Plantagenet on the solitary seashore at Weymouth, that Cardurcis, instead of being the merely amiable, and somewhat narrow-minded being that she supposed, had not been invested with those brilliant and commanding qualities which she felt could alone master her esteem. Often had she, in those abstract hours, played with

27. Sichel, p.16.

> her imagination in combining the genius of her father with the soft heart of that friend to whom she was so deeply attached. (p.265)

The reader is aware at this point that Cardurcis has become as great a poet as her father, and reads the passage quoted above as a confirmation of a growing synthesis, rather than the contrast it seems on the surface. When Lady Annabel, Venetia's mother, becomes suspicious of her daughter's growing attachment to Cardurcis she attempts to forestall any question of marriage by classing her daughter's lover with her own husband. Speaking of the latter, she says, "'Was he less beautiful than Cardurcis? Was he less gifted?... He could whisper in tones as sweet, and pour out his vows as fervently. Yet what am I? O my child!... beware of such beings!'" (p.296).

If the public denounce Herbert as "the most depraved of men" (p.219), Cardurcis is called "an unprincipled and unparalleled reprobate" (p.321). In this situation both men insist on showing themselves in public before retreating abroad, where they finally meet; and it is in Italian waters that both men suffer the same fate, together.

Countess Guiccioli has an intelligent suggestion to make as to the reasons that Disraeli might have had to construct the book on this concept of "double" character. Disraeli "portrays Lord Byron as he was, or as he would have been in the given circumstances.... In reading Venetia it is impossible not to like Lord Cardurcis.... nor to respect Mr. Herbert, whom he styles the 'best and greatest of men.' as [Byron] would have been revered had [he] reached a greater age. [Disraeli]

depicts Byron at every epoch of his life, and as circumstances develop his latent predispositions," and later:

> In making Herbert live to a mature age, and in centering in him every grace, every quality, every perfection with which a mortal can be gifted, he wished to show to what degree of moral perfection Lord Byron might have attained, and how happy he might have been in the peace and quiet of domestic life, had he been joined to another wife in matrimony, since notwithstanding Lady Annabel's faults, happiness was not out of Herbert's reach. The conclusion to which Disraeli no doubt points is the inward avowal by Lady Annabel herself that she, not Herbert, was the cause of their separation, and of their useless misfortunes. 27a

What we are seeing here again is the pattern first established in Vivian Grey in which the young hero, after attempting through both study and action to discover how to live, discovers that the path he has chosen has been trodden by others before, and meets what is in effect a version of what his own future might have been. In Vivian Grey the discovery comes too late for the hero to regain the political prominence he would need to put into practice the lessons he has learnt. In The Young Duke the hero's "double" is the narrator himself, whose own peaceful life predicts the hero's future peace. In Contarini Fleming the discovery of what his father achieved in circumstances almost identical to his own provides Fleming with a retrospective understanding of the two sides of his own character. In Venetia the two aspects of the one life are placed together, for comparison, to assist the comprehension of how one brought about the other. Since it can clearly be argued that Cardurcis and Herbert are one, once they have been brought together and the single character is complete, it is only fitting that they should die the same death.

27a. Guiccioli, pp.489, 497.

But beyond all this is the dual nature of the novel. In the rather sad picture of the ageing Herbert we can see what Cardurcis might have become. In the youthful Cardurcis we can see the causes of the estrangement which occurred in the older generation beginning to repeat themselves. By conflating the two we can see cause and effect simultaneously.

For Holbrook Jackson, Disraeli "is part of that Romantic movement with which the eighteenth century closed and the nineteenth opened - the movement which had for its symbols Napoleon no less than Rousseau, Byron, Heine and Shelley."[28] To H.B. Samuel, Disraeli was "deeply imbued with the Byronic tradition," and the attitudes inherent in that tradition can be found in all his works: Vivian Grey "frequently catches the genuine Byronic dash and glamour," and Richard Garnett suggests that "Byron had prompted Contarini Fleming."[29] But it is an overstatement to say that "Disraeli frequently created his hero in the image of Byron, or in the image of one of Byron's most flamboyant characters,"[30] because his later heroes were too passive to reflect the passionate behaviour and the imaginative intensity of the earlier characters. While there are intermittent

28. Holbrook Jackson, "Benjamin Disraeli," in Great English Novelists (London, 1909), p.214.

29. H.B. Samuel, "Two Dandy Novels, Vivian Grey and Pelham," Academy and Literature, Vol.67 (1904), pp.316, 317; Richard Garnett, "Shelley and Lord Beaconsfield," in Essays of an Ex-Librarian (London, 1901), p.105.

30. James D. Merritt, "Disraeli as a Byronic Poet," Victorian Poetry, Vol. III (1965), p.138.

reminders in Tancred, Venetia in 1837 marks the high point of direct Byronic involvement. In the later novels Sidonia, "a Byronic man of mystery,"[31] reveals most strongly this link with his past, as perhaps do the thematic concerns with will and destiny in Endymion.

F. Gilbert puts Disraeli in a wider context; he is interested in the German character of the work: Disraeli "created in Contarini Fleming a work similar to the Bildungsroman portraying the development of a character. The Wilhelm-Meister theme of the formation of a poetic mind was the task which he had set himself."[32] This had been noticed as early as 1832, when a reviewer wrote, "I am quite certain that if 'Wilhelm Meister' had never been written, Contarini Fleming would never have walked into the ideal world,"[33] and indeed, in his Preface to the 1845 edition of Contarini Fleming Disraeli himself says, "The author proposed... [as] a subject... the development and formation of the poetic character. It has, indeed, been sometimes incidentally treated, and partially illustrated by writers of the highest class, as for instance Goethe in his Wilhelm Meister." Susanne Howe connects this to the Byronic tradition: "The confessional quality of these apprentice novels may also be connected with Byronism. Their heroes are often misunderstood and badly adjusted young men, unappreciated by their families,

31. J.W. Burrow, "The Sense of the Past," in Laurence Lerner, ed., The Victorians (London, 1978), p.137.

32. F. Gilbert, "The Germany of Contarini Fleming," Contemporary Review, Vol.149 (1936), p.74.

33. New Monthly Magazine, Vol.35 (1832), p.26. This review has been attributed to Bulwer Lytton: see Stewart, Disraeli's Novels Reviewed, p.vii.

and full of loud complaints against the world."[34] This could stand as a precise description of Contarini Fleming. Indeed in her general description of the development of this strand of the English novel, she might have been talking specifically of Disraeli's heroes:

> Thus the English apprentice heroes, often derived only indirectly from Goethe through Carlyle's translation of Meister and his interpretations of Goethe in general, pass through their black period of Wertherism and Byronism to the Carlylean conviction that they must find something to do in the world, and do it whole-heartedly.[35]

The only thing missing from this account is its relationship to the fashionable novel, and here Rosa can be relied upon:

> Clearly enough, the fashionable novel grew out of the eighteenth century novel of manners, but later borrowings and accretions from the picaresque romance and the German apprenticeship novel complicate the story. The intellectual dandy is, in essence, a picaresque rogue who has substituted a decorous canter on moonlit heaths.... Wisdom instead of physical adventure became a quest for youth, for often the young German apprentice to life appeared as a most natural offspring of the picaresque rogue.[36]

These then were the elements from which Disraeli was to create the political novel.

iv

Over a century of critical opinion has consistently offered one other source of Disraeli's achievement - his own

34. Susanne Howe, Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen (New York, 1930), p.9.

35. Ibid., p.11.

36. Rosa, pp.8-9.

life. We read that "Vivian Grey is the author himself," or that "The biographical interest of Vivian Grey cannot be overestimated.... All that is known about Disraeli's youth justifies identifying him with Vivian Grey."[37] Jerman invents a character called "Contarini-Disraeli."[38] Cazamian, writing of Sybil, claims that Egremont "represents Disraeli himself in his public and official capacity," while Robert Hamilton is even more sweeping: Sybil "is weakest in... characterization - the exception being people based upon elements in Disraeli's own character."[39] When we come to Tancred the reaction is the same. Brandes sees "Lord Beaconsfield's own face... so plainly behind Eva's beautiful mask," and most excessive of all, Frietzsche claims that Lothair is Disraeli's spiritual biography and writes, "All of Disraeli's heroes are in a large sense Disraeli, several of them avowedly so."[40] Such remarks could be multiplied many times over, and their prevalence is due more to a desire to understand the character of the public man than to any obvious autobiographical cast to his fiction. Indeed their very omnipresence shows their error: no one man could have inspired Vivian Grey, Contarini Fleming, Egremont and Eva, unless the inspiration be so general as to be meaningless.

It is not only characters who have been thus identified, but too often the voice of the narrator has been confused with that of the man and politician. An understanding of how that voice changes, from the cynicism of Vivian Grey, to the contrast

37. Jeaffreson, p.230; Cazamian, pp.176-7.

38. Jerman, p.56.

39. Cazamian, p.193; Robert Hamilton, "Disraeli and the two nations," Quarterly Review, Vol.288 (1950), p.107.

40. Brandes, p.175; Frietzsche, Disraeli's Religion, p.37.

between frivolity and despair in The Young Duke, to the split personality of Contarini Fleming might have induced a greater understanding of their author. Exceptionally, Robert O'Kell argues that the early novels are autobiographical "not in the sense that historical matter from the author's life gets directly into the fiction, but rather in the sense that the same pattern runs through the life and the fiction, displaying there the same needs and motives," which he sees as Disraeli's need to define his identity - "the author's central ambivalence... his alternatively seeking success through a demonstration of his genius and claiming recognition of a innate unquestioned superiority."[41] This in turn leads O'Kell to understand the early books as characterized by conflict, either internal or against external forces, with frequent lapses into passivity. Though my source is a study of Disraeli's fictional techniques, my conclusions are similar.

There are two particular dangers which an autobiographical approach encourages. The first is a desire to know whom all the minor characters represent, hence the proliferation of "keys," whose source, no doubt, is the original advertising methods. "Almost all the novels are to a greater or lesser extent romans-à-clef"[42] is as typical and as fruitless a remark as those which categorize all the novels as autobiographies. The aridity of this approach is perhaps best described by Disraeli himself. In a letter of 1827 to Colburn he wrote

41. O'Kell, pp.282 and 254.

42. Eric Forbes-Boyd,"Disraeli the Novelist," Essays and Studies, Vol.III N.S. (1950), p.106.

> How my knowledge of the characters in Vivian Grey can be necessary to, or indeed in the slightest degree assist anyone in understanding the work, is to me a most inexplicable mystery.... If any collateral information be required in order to understand the work, either Vivian Grey is unworthy to be read, or, which is of course an impossible conclusion, the reader is not sagacious enough to penetrate its meaning.
>
> Of course I have no intention of denying that these volumes are in a great degree founded on my own observations and experience. Possibly, in some instances, I may have very accurately depicted existing characters. But Vivian Grey is not given to the public as a gallery of portraits, nor have I any wish that it should be considered as such.[43]

Disraeli did make use of historical and factual material in his novels - which will be discussed at length in the next chapter - but the use he made of it bears no relation to the gossip-mongering interest of the "key"-makers.

The second error the autobiographical approach gives rise to is more insidious. Let us take a seemingly sympathetic and perceptive remark by Edmund Gosse: "Under all the preposterous conversation, all the unruly turmoil of description, there runs a strong thread of entirely sober, political, and philosophical ambition... [though] he does not allow his seriousness to outweigh his liveliness."[44] Gosse's recognition of the finely balanced sides of Disraeli's style, the preposterous and the sober, is to be welcomed, but he characterises the latter as political and ambitious, terms which one feels have drifted in from accounts of the life of the author. The way is then open for lesser critics to allow other Disraelian "attributes" into

43. Quoted in the Introduction to Vivian Grey, ed. Bernard N. Langdon-Davies, Young England Edition (London, 1904), pp.xxiv-xxv.

44. Gosse, pp.161 2.

their interpretations of his writing:"It is believed that he shared with Spinoza the distinctly national combination of mysticism and cool-headed shrewdness, of powerful imagination and mathematical precision in argument."[45] Only too easily do personal opinions about the politician colour the picture of the author.

Because Disraeli was the political public man that he was, and because he developed the political novel into a recognized sub-genre (even Lothair and Endymion come under this definition at its widest) the autobiographical approach is very tempting. In the end, however, such an approach is merely condescending. By strictly considering the technical, structural and stylistic methods that Disraeli employed, I hope to further his claim to serious consideration as a novelist.

45. M.F. Modder, "The Alien Patriot in Disraeli's Novels," London Quarterly and Holborn Review, Vol.159 (1934), p.366.

PART II: THE POLITICAL TRILOGY

CHAPTER FOUR: CONINGSBY

Lord Blake tells us that "the trilogy made up by Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred is quite different from anything Disraeli had written before. A wide gulf separates them from his silver fork novels and historical romances of the 'twenties and 'thirties."[1] The gulf is not as wide as that, however, and it would be wrong not to recognize what similarities there are. In a review dated 13 May 1844, Thackeray wrote of Coningsby as an extension of the fashionable novel, in which dandies are the heroes who are to "regenerate the world - to heal the wounds of the wretched body politic - to infuse new blood into torpid old institutions - to reconcile the ancient world to the modern," and he continues by making what, with hindsight, looks like a prophecy about the trilogy as a whole: "It is a dandy-social, dandy-political, dandy-religious novel."[2] We have seen how the fashionable and the political worlds overlapped in Disraeli's early novels; what Thackeray noticed was that while developing

1. Blake, p. 190.

2. William Makepeace Thackeray: Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, ed. Gordon N. Ray (Urbana, Ill., 1955), pp.39,40.

this aspect of the fashionable novel Disraeli had also added social and religious questions, something which would become even more marked in the rest of the trilogy.

However, Disraeli's major innovation in Coningsby was to move from a simple picture of the fashionable/political world to a study of politics, and especially of the origins and growth of the "new" Tory party represented by the ideals of the Young England group.[3] Because the book's allegiance is to a new concept of Toryism, Disraeli was able to continue the attack on established power which we noted earlier, and, as Brandes writes, "Tories and Whigs are assailed by the same merciless satire."[4] More important than party impartiality, however, was Disraeli's questioning the origins of political belief itself. The novel contains much (almost certainly too much) abstract discussion, but it is nevertheless firmly based in the actual world of politics and political intrigue. As Blake says, "In portraying, as he does in Coningsby, the conflict between political compromise and political principle Disraeli portrays the eternal dilemma of politics."[5] Disraeli was quite aware of what he was doing. As narrator, he calls the novel one "which, in an unpretending shape, aspires to take neither an uninformed nor a partial view of the political history

3. Blake, pp.194-9, contains an excellent summary of Disraeli's historical and political analysis as it appears in Coningsby and Sybil; or see Monypenny and Buckle, I.665-700, for a longer account, often quoting directly from the novels.

4. Brandes, p.198.

5. Robert Blake, "Disraeli's Political Novels," History Today, Vol.XVI (1966), p.462.

of the ten eventful years of the Reform struggle" (p.278), and in the Preface to the 1849 edition he says that "the main purpose of [the] writer was to vindicate the just claims of the Tory party to be the popular political confederation of the country."

Coningsby is so imbued with politics that it cannot be understood unless the political events of the period which it covers are clear to the reader. As the narrator says, "What wonderful things are events! The least are of greater importance than the most sublime and comprehensive speculations!" (p.52). Blake understates the case when he says that "Disraeli's trilogy cannot be fully understood without reference to contemporary events and ideas."[6] For this novel at least, when the rebirth of the Tory party is being described and its antecedents analysed, a more precise knowledge is required than he seems to suggest. The very span of the novel provides its own clue. Significantly it opens on the ninth of May 1832, the day that Lord Grey resigned his Prime Ministership, after the King had refused to create enough Peers to ensure the passage of the Reform Bill, and it effectively closes with the General Election of July 1841, with the Tories (including Coningsby and his friends) in the majority and so forming the Government.

The political concerns of the novel are presented in three different ways, which are fairly closely interwoven. The first is historical narrative. In the opening Book, for instance,

6. Blake, Disraeli, p.191.

the political history of May 1832 is retold in two major episodes, Chapters II and VII. Grey's resignation, Lord Lyndhurst's advice to the King to call on Wellington, whose attempt to form a Tory administration lasted less than a week, the return of Grey and the passing of the Reform Bill are all described. It is important, however, to recognize other political elements in Coningsby. One is a discussion of the principles of representation and suffrage which lie behind the Reform Bill. Disraeli here, in Book I, Ch. VII, as throughout the novel, insists on questioning the bases of political behaviour - a valid process in a novel which seeks to establish the philosophy of the new Tory party, as it had arisen through the historical processes of 1832 to 1841. It is these passages, however, which have given rise to much criticism of the novel, "with its extended exposition and its lengthy undramatic political dialogue,"[7] and which perhaps lie behind Lord David Cecil's comment that the books "are not strictly speaking novels... but discussions on political and religious questions put into fictional form."[8] In later years Disraeli employed such passages less and less. Later a third element, Disraeli's ability to dramatize the book's central concept, was to take their place, and in Coningsby the development of the new Tory party is already shown through the development of Coningsby himself, and the personal history of Coningsby and the course of external events are directly related. Philip Guedalla was perhaps more correct than he knew when he wrote, " the real

7. Curtis Dahl, "History on the Hustings," in Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, eds., From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad (Minneapolis, 1957), p.71.

8. Lord David Cecil, Early Victorian Novels (London, 1934), p.290n.

heroes and villains of Coningsby are political ideas."[9] It is certainly true of Coningsby and his grandfather, the new Tory and the old.

It is worth remembering why Coningsby is present at his grandfather's house at the opening of the book. Lord Monmouth has only returned to England in an attempt to help destroy the Reform Bill. One could say that the meeting has been brought about by the Bill. The analogies continue: just as the Tory party is thought to be destroyed with the passing of the Bill, so in Ch. IX Coningsby is thought to be drowned, although he has in fact saved the life of the son of an industrialist. The suggestion here is clearly that the event which was thought to destroy him (and the party) has in fact created an alliance for the future with the growing industrial power in British life which will be mutually beneficial. The connection between the two events is stressed by the emphasis on the role of rumour in each affair. In London,

> the world is in agitation and uproar. At present the world and the confusion are limited to St. James's Street and Pall Mall; but soon the boundaries and the tumult will be extended to the intended metropolitan boroughs; to-morrow they will spread over the manufacturing districts. It is perfectly evident, that before eight-and-forty hours have passed, the country will be in a state of fearful crisis.... (p.23)

At the school, "as rumours rise in society we know not how, so there was suddenly a flying report in this multitude, the origin of which no one in his alarm stopped to ascertain, that a boy was drowned" (p.47).

9. Guedalla, p.190.

Book II leaps over two years and begins in November 1834, when the Whig Parliament is again dissolved. In its first chapter Disraeli sketches in the history of two years of Whig government and Tory Opposition, and then enters on a more abstract discussion of the position in which the Tory Party finds itself. It is important to notice that Disraeli begins Book II this way, putting political history to the fore, and to see how again he immediately introduces a questioning of political bases; in this case it is his argument that the Tory Party of the time was not true to Tory principles, but had "arrogated to itself the name of an illustrious historical party, pursued a policy which was either founded on no principle whatever, or on principles exactly contrary to those which had always guided the conduct of the great Tory leaders" (p.67). One may here be reminded of Coningsby's own background: an orphan who assumes (and is assumed by others) to be a Tory of the old school simply because of his name and family connections. In Book II, Chapters IV and V, Disraeli advances the historical narrative with the King again asking Wellington to take over until Peel returns from Rome, Peel's composition of the Tamworth Manifesto before the election and the eventual return of the Whigs in 1835 with a somewhat reduced majority. Against the "usurping" Tories he argues that "The Tamworth Manifesto of 1834 was an attempt to construct a party without principles" (p.98) and that principles must be the basis of any party. Disraeli's question to the Conservatives - "What will you conserve?" (p.99) - is one that Coningsby is to ask himself later on, and with similar answers. Here the narrator ironically answers, "The prerogatives of the Crown, provided they are not exercised; the independence of the House of Lords, provided it is not asserted; the Ecclesiastical estate, provided it

is regulated by a commission of laymen" (p.99). In Book V, Ch. II, Coningsby will answer, equally bitterly, "'A Crown robbed of its prerogatives; a Church controlled by a commission; and an Aristocracy that does not lead'" (p.263). However Coningsby's personal story is not omitted in Book II, for, as Disraeli says,

> Amid the contentions of party, the fierce struggles of ambition, and the intricacies of political intrigue, let us not forget our Eton friends. During the period which elapsed from the failure of the Duke of Wellington to form a government in 1832, to the failure of Sir Robert Peel to carry on a government in 1835, the boys had entered, and advanced in youth. (p.103)

The connection between the political and the personal is amply clear there: much of their time is, of course, spent in discussing politics.

Political narrative is resumed in Book IV, Ch. V. Another two years have passed and "towards the end of the session of 1836, the hopes of the Conservative party were again in the ascendant" (p.174), but the real political discussion in this Book occurs in Ch. XIII, when the wealthy Jewish financier Sidonia is introduced. In conversation with Coningsby he rejects Utilitarianism and materialistic explanations of social unrest, and he considers such abstractions as national character, imagination and passion instead. Coningsby, telling him, "'I am speaking to elicit truth not to maintain opinions... for I have none'" (p.238), accepts Sidonia's views. His position as a follower of Sidonia is emphasized soon afterwards in Ch. XIV when Coningsby comes second to him in a steeplechase. (Monmouth's

intention eventually to advance Coningsby in the unreconstructed Tory party is neatly indicated by mounting him on Monmouth's horse, Sir Robert.)

In Book V Disraeli continues to maintain a political narrative alongside the personal. In 1837,

> Less than a year after the arrival of Coningsby at Cambridge, and which he had only once quitted in the interval, and that to pass a short time in Berkshire with his friend Buckhurst, occurred the death of King William IV. This event necessarily induced a dissolution of the Parliament, elected under the auspices of Sir Robert Peel in 1834, and after the publication of the Tamworth Manifesto. (p.260)

Though Disraeli takes the occasion to comment on the deficiencies of the Whigs which caused them progressively to lose the advantage that the 1832 Reform Act gave them, it is noticeable that Coningsby, rather than the narrator, bears the brunt of the political discussion. For the first time Coningsby is directly involved in politics, in the local election at Cambridge. Having assisted an unreformed Tory to victory, he is ashamed of himself: "'It was our last schoolboy weakness'" (p.263); "'Let us think of principles, and not of parties'" (p.265). This is the developing pattern which the rest of the book supports. Though the same questions which the narrator posed originally continue to be asked throughout the novel, the questioner changes, so that, for example, by Book VII, Ch. II, when Coningsby and Millbank discuss their political thinking, Coningsby is the mentor and is propounding opinions which the reader can recognize as a compound of Sidonia's and the narrator's. Indeed it is not until Book IX, Ch. VI, that the narrator again introduces a

political issue: "The state of political parties in England in the spring of 1841 offered a most remarkable contrast to their condition at the period commemorated in the first chapter of this work" (p.463), and as the Conservative Party passes from oblivion to Government, so Coningsby moves from obscurity to a seat in the House, to wealth and to marriage. Just as (or so Disraeli argues) the Whigs have brought the election upon themselves ("The dissolution of the Whig Parliament by the Whigs" (p.466)), thus giving government to the Conservatives, so it is a Whig, Mr. Millbank, who "resigned the representation of the town...[and] begged to propose to them... HARRY CONINGSBY, ESQ." (p.468).

With the death of Coningsby's grandfather, Disraeli signifies the death of the old Tory party. Initially Coningsby cannot fully understand what this means: "This was a crisis in the life of Coningsby; yet, like many critical epochs, the person most interested in it was not sufficiently aware of its character" (p.442). The results of the general election which occurs soon afterwards constitute a similar change in English life, marked by a similar ignorance: "There was a great clamour in every quarter, and the clamour was against the Whigs and in favour of Conservative principles.... What they mean by Conservative principles... is another question" (p.465).[10] Finally Coningsby is totally identified with the new Conservative party.

10. Disraeli also compared the ignorance of the people of England and of Coningsby at an earlier crisis: "During this eventful week of May 1832, when an important revolution was effected in the most considerable of modern kingdoms, in a manner so tranquil, that the victims themselves were scarcely conscious at the time of the catastrophe, Coningsby passed his hours in unaccustomed pleasures, and in novel excitement" (p.38).

This connection between the political history of England from 1832 to 1841 and Coningsby's own career creates the essential structure of the novel. The actual events of those years determine Coningsby's life, making irrelevant such remarks as those of Bernard N. Langdon-Davies in his Introduction to the Young England Edition of Coningsby, that "the incidents are liable to struggle in a somewhat disorderly manner after the fundamental ideas," or Edmund Gosse, that "narrative pure and simple inclines to take a secondary place," or Georg Brandes' description, "a novel without any artistic form.....In spite of its nine books, there is no action in the novel.... [T]he plot of the book is so unimportant because nothing turns upon it."[11] On the contrary the incidents of the plot take their importance from their relationship to political history: if the new Tory party is produced by the events of those years, so is Coningsby. They develop simultaneously in a symmetrical pattern.

From his first novel there is a consistently factual basis to Disraeli's fiction. The two parts of Vivian Grey may be taken to illustrate the two forms which it has taken. Blake tells us that Part I of the novel "is the story of the Representative transposed from the journalistic to the political key,"[12]

11. B.N. Langdon-Davies, Introduction to Coningsby, Young England Edition (London, 1904), p.xxvii; Gosse, p.165; Brandes, pp.198, 206.

12. Blake, p.37. By contrasting Vivian Grey and the story of the Representative taken from various sources, including hitherto unpublished letters of Disraeli, Charles C. Nickerson convincingly upholds Blake's proposition. He instances, among other similarities, the fact that in an early draft of the novel Disraeli wrote "Chiefswood" (Lockhart's home) instead of Kenrich Lodge (Cleveland's home). Nickerson, "Disraeli, Lockhart and Murray: An Episode in the History of the 'Quarterly Review,'" Victorian Studies, Vol. XV (1972), pp.279-306.

and this story would have been recognizable to at least some of his readers; Part II however, being based on memories of his private European travels in 1824 and 1826, would not. While J.M. Robson acutely observes that "Disraeli, on his journey, tended to see through literary eyes, and to present his experience [in his letters] as being at least the basis for fiction;"[13] when he came to make use of such material in his novels he assimilated it silently and completely. Contarini Fleming, especially in its later chapters, follows the latter pattern, using sections from the private letters Disraeli wrote during the early parts of his 1830-1 tour.[14] Alroy uses two sources unrecognisable at the time - his own letters and Rabbi Benjamin of Tutela's itinerary[15] - and includes eighty-two informative footnotes. Venetia extends the pattern of using material which Disraeli knew his audience would recognise. Although Richard Garnett argues that Disraeli's knowledge of Shelley and Byron exceeded what was commonly known at the time, what is important for us is that his readers would have an unacknowledged factual substructure available to them to support the fiction.[16] It was this form of documentary support on which Disraeli would increasingly rely.

13. J.M. Robson, "'Home Letters' and Disraeli," Proceedings of the Disraeli Colloquium, 22 and 23 April 1978, p.67.

14. See Charles C. Nickerson, "Benjamin Disraeli's Contarini Fleming and Alroy," Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries, Vol.39 (1977), p.83, which lists the material from the letters to be found in these novels. Cited by J.M. Robson, p.77 n.62.

15. See A. Brandl, "Zur Quelle von Disraeli's 'Alroy,'" Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, Vol. 148 (1925), pp.97-8.

16. See Garnett, pp.101-25.

As we shall see Parliamentary Blue Books and his own researches lay behind the documentary flavour of parts of Sybil, and are a fairly conventional bulwark to his argument that something must be done to improve the condition of the working classes. Lothair's historical background would have been completely recognizable, and emphasizes the novel's sense of crisis (until Disraeli deliberately defuses it); as late as 1880 a review of Endymion commented upon "that keen and shrewd scrutiny of facts for which his writing, in the midst of all their extravagance and fantasy are distinguished."[17] Endymion, more than Disraeli's other novels, relies upon the reader's acceptance of historical material, since its very theme is historical change.

Something as consistent as this is surely not accidental. Disraeli is constantly offering his readers a covert series of comparisons. It is not enough to say that Disraeli "created a world which was closely related to contemporary society and which reflected its urgent preoccupations."[18] The very world he created was known to his readers and the way he used it in his fiction became part of his argument. Wendell Harris comes much nearer the mark: "When Coningsby takes the measure of Taper and Tadpole, or when [in Sybil] Egremont visits the hovel of the Warren family, the reader is presented with propositions about parliametary government and economic conditions which invite him to compare them with fact."[19] The reader may find

17. Fraser's Magazine, Vol.102 N.S. 22 (1880), pp.711-2.

18. Brian Beyers, "Novels and Politics," Contrast, Vol.8 (1973), p.64.

19. Harris, pp.66-7.

this method disconcerting as Disraeli does not spell out his comparisons, but here in Coningsby the central constrast is between the development of Coningsby and the sequence of events which gave rise to the new Tory Party with which he is ultimately identified.

Walter Allen argues that "Coningsby is a novel in which the ideal and the real exist side by side.... In Coningsby the actual exists as a foil to the ideal.... The actual is the world of Lord Monmouth and his hangers-on."[20] What he calls the real world is the public world - of history, of politics, of Lord Monmouth. What he calls the ideal world is that which encompasses the private idealistic world of Coningsby himself, and the development of the book is to show the latter entering and vanquishing the old corrupt world of the former.

The relationship between the private and the public is established at the novel's outset:

> It was a bright May morning some twelve years ago, when a youth of still tender age, for he had certainly not entered his teens by more than two years, was ushered into the waiting-room of a house in the vicinity of St. James's Square, which, though with the general appearance of a private residence, and that too of no very ambitious character, exhibited at this period symptoms of being occupied for some public purpose. (p.1; my underling)

The political events of those momentous days and Coningsby's (for him at least) equally momentous meeting with his grandfather alternate throughout the opening of the novel. The

20. Walter Allen, Introduction to Coningsby (London, 1948), pp.14-5.

political "impending revolution" (p.15) alternates with Coningsby's personal recognition that for him, "the crisis was at hand" (p.17). While waiting to see his grandfather, Coningsby straightens a picture of the Duke of Wellington, perhaps an early suggestion of his future - "'You are setting the Duke to rights'" (p.2).[21] Just as the Tory party is thought to be on the verge of defeat, but gains a short reprieve, so Coningsby "muffs" his first interview with his grandfather, but soon recovers his position.

It is important here to make a distinction between Coningsby and other contemporary novels whose heroes undergo what may seem a similar development, spiritually and politically. Walter E. Houghton writes:

> In the forties Disraeli found society "in the midst of a convulsion in which the very principles of our political and social systems are called in question," and created a hero in its image--"confused, perplexed," his mind "a chaos"; but his spirit sustained "by a profound, however vague, conviction, that there are still great truths, if we could but work them out."[22]

Houghton makes this description the basis of a comparison between Coningsby and Tom Brown at Oxford. Although both novels are part of the condition-of-England school, Tom Brown at Oxford shows one man's struggle to discover a philosophy on which he can base his life, whereas Coningsby's development is symbolically predetermined by events. All the influences on Tom Brown are personal and the novel charts them and Brown's adaptation to them. Coningsby is the new Tory party, coming from the same

21. Similarly in Sybil the parlour of the radical coffee-house keeper is "adorned with portraits of Tom Paine, Cobbett, Thistlewood and General Jackson" (p.359).

22. Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 (New Haven, Conn., 1957), p.19. The internal quotations are from Coningsby, pp.146-7.

stock, subject to the same influences, and as yet as little established in opinions. It is more a question of allowing external events to define Coningsby's position, where for Tom Brown classical studies "began to have a new meaning to him, but chiefly because they bore more or less on the great Harry Winburn problem; which problem, indeed, for him had now fairly swelled into the condition-of-England problem."[23]

Although the passivity of Disraeli's heroes may seem consistent throughout his later novels, the reason for it is somewhat different in Coningsby and Endymion from that in Sybil, Tancred and Lothair. These three latter books are, like Tom Brown at Oxford, novels in which the hero seeks a philosophy. His lack of action is caused by his ignorance - he does not know what he ought to do. In Coningsby and Endymion, however, there is no question but that the hero must take his place in public life. Significantly neither of these heroes is tempted by anything else. Their courses are settled, Coningsby's because his life must parallel that of the Tory party, and Endymion's because, in a book which deals with the vicissitudes of fortune, he must be buffeted by alternate adversity and prosperity.

The essential quality that Disraelistresses in Coningsby is youth, not just Coningsby's, but that of all "The New Generation," the subtitle of the novel. In Vivian Grey, Contarini Fleming and Venetia Disraeli had shown sympathetic insight into the problems of youth - "some forgotten critic [of Venetia] noted that he was almost the first writer 'who resolutely set

23. Thomas Hughes, Tom Brown at Oxford (London, 1897), p.345.

himself to picture the child life,' and accounted this to his credit."[24] In Coningsby, however, the "child life" is not presented for its own sake. Though the description of Coningsby's childhood may remind us of the early novels, in fact it is the question of education which is more important. Speare notes, "The whole course of the volume is a means of showing us the process of [Coningsby's] education."[25] Because Disraeli wants to show the early sources of the "new" Tory party Coningsby deals with the hero's childhood; in later novels the hero's education will come to him as a young man.

Coningsby is indeed described as the "representative of the New Generation" (p.151), and in this novel Youth is not a quality to be ashamed of, nor one which will automatically lead to mistakes; indeed, as I have noted earlier, in as far as it isolates the new generation from the faults of their elders, it is a virtue. This separation is stressed: "It was the first time that any inkling of the views of the New Generation had caught his ear. They were strange and unaccustomed accents" (p.324).

Throughout the novel Coningsby is seen on the verge of making his debut into society:[26] "And now the hour has come when this youth is to be launched into a world more vast than that in which he has hitherto sojourned.... What, indeed, is to be the

24. Monypenny and Buckle, I.368.

25. Speare, p.74.

26. Paul Mitchell exhaustively illustrates this aspect of the book in "The Initiation Motif in Benjamin Disraeli's Coningsby," but ultimately makes too much of it; e.g., the "initiation motif... serves as the structuring principle and major unifying force in Coningsby." The Southern Quarterly, Vol.10 (1971), pp.223-30. The quotation is from p.223.

future of this existence that is now to be sent forth into the great aggregate of entities?" (p.109) - this as he leaves Eton at the end of Book II. Soon afterwards the change from schoolboy to undergraduate is emphasized: "the former schoolboy had planted his foot on the threshold of manhood" (p.111). But before he goes up to University Coningsby pays an important visit to Beaumanoir, a visit which "was to have been made by the schoolboy; it was to be fulfilled by the man.... [H]e had but few years to wait before the full development of his power" (p.122). His trip to Paris is likewise described: "'French, my dear Harry... is the key to this second education. In a couple of years or so you will enter the world'" (p.201). At the end of another stage, his undergraduate career, Coningsby plans to meet his friend Millbank: "And now they were to meet on the eve of entering that world for which they had made so sedulous a preparation" (p.349). After Coningsby's stay at Coningsby Castle he is described as "about....to make his formal entrance into the great world" (p.394). In fact Coningsby himself sums up the years between first meeting his grandfather and the final break with him as "eight years of initiation" (p.414). This aspect of Coningsby's character does not diminish with time. It is important to recognize it as the prevalent tone to the very end: "They stand now on the threshold of public life. They are in the leash, but in a moment they will be slipped. What will be their fate?" (p.477).

Coninsgby himself is aware that he needs advice and instruction:

> Often, indeed, had he needed, sometimes he had even sighed for, the companionship of an equal or superior mind; one who, by the comprehension of his thought, and the richness of his knowledge, and the advantage of his experience, might strengthen and illuminate and guide his obscure or hesitating or unpractised intelligence. (p.112)

It is at that moment that Sidonia enters to extend into a dialogue the thoughtful role fulfilled by the narrator during Coningsby's youth. In the early stages of the novel the narrator interpreted the political events for us, and by the end Coningsby will be experienced enough to come to the same conclusions.[27] In the body of the novel, however, Coningsby must have a contemporary to discuss them with. Sidonia, despite his amazing accomplishments - he "had exhausted all the sources of human knowledge... was master of the learning of every nation, of all tongues" (p.216) - is a young man, "an individual, who, though perhaps ten years older than Coningsby, was still... in the period of lusty youth" (p.114). Likewise Eustace Lyle, whom Coningsby is to count among his mentors, is just of age: "he had succeeded to a great estate early in his minority, which had only this year terminated" (p.130). Like Coningsby, Lyle sees the period as one of crisis and change - "'But I enter life in the midst of a convulsion in which the very principles of our political and social systems are called in question'" (p.146) - one in which whatever decisions he takes will be significant: "'I assure you I feel confused, perplexed, harassed. I know I have public duties to perform; I am, in fact, every day in my life solicited by all parties to throw the

27. Daniel Schwarz both reminds us of Disraeli's literary antecedents and illuminates Coningsby when he writes that "as is often the case in a bildungsroman employing an omniscient third-person narrator, Disraeli's narrator expresses the values to which the protagonist evolves. Thus there is a gradually narrowing distance between narrator... and Coningsby, as the latter becomes a spokesman of the former." Daniel R. Schwarz, "Progressive Dubiety: The Discontinuity of Disraeli's Political Trilogy," Victorian Newsletter, No.47 (Spring 1975), p.15.

weight of my influence in one scale or another; but I am paralysed'" (p.147).

The significance of this emphasis on youth does not go unexplained. Sidonia does not have the role (as so many critics have claimed) merely of speaking for Disraeli,[28] but he does come to articulate the abstract theorizing which the narrator had propounded earlier, and one of the clearest instances of this is in Book III, Ch. I, when he first meets Coningsby. A paean of praise to specifically youthful genius ends, "'The history of Heroes is the history of Youth'" (p.120), and we are told that when Sidonia "descanted on the influence of... the divine power of youth and genius, he touched a string that was the very heart-chord of his companion" (p.125). From Sidonia Coningsby learns so much that he can eventually say, "'It is a holy thing to see a state saved by its youth'" (p.359), and formally identify Youth as the central virtue of the novel and its driving force. Coningsby "was exactly the youth that would have hung with enthusiastic humility on the accents of some sage of old in the groves of Academus, or the porch of Zeno. But as yet he had found age only perplexed and desponding; manhood only callous and desperate" (p.124). The point is amply illustrated immediately after this by the worldly advice offered by Rigby and rejected by Coningsby.

28. See Cazamian, p.185: "Under a skilful yet transparent disguise, the author himself is represented in Sidonia *in his unofficial role among the chiefs of the new* Toryism"; or even Blake, "Disraeli's Political Novels," p.460: "Sidonia--that strange amalgam of Rothschild and the author himself, Disraeli's revenge for Fagin."

Bernard N. Langdon-Davies correctly connects this belief in youth and the historical setting of the novel when he relates the book to the Young England background from which it sprang: "it was not only a belief in the power at all times of youth that Young England professed, but also a belief in the special importance and influence of youth at that particular epoch."[29] And Georg Brandes, with his remark, "The question with which Coningsby concludes contains the political problem of the hour," reveals how this emphasis on youth is an answer to the critics who complain that the novel does not provide answers to the questions it raises, or to those who mistake the meaning of some of the incidents.[30] When Charles Kingsley added a chapter to Yeast in 1851, satirizing Eustace Lyle's alms-giving in Coningsby, he seems to have assumed that alms-giving was being advanced as a solution to the problem of the rural poor, rather than as a source for the development of a political philosophy.[31] The significance of the ending lies in the very fact that it is a question: "Will they... restore the happiness of their country by believing in their own energies, and daring to be great?" (p.477). The novel has analyzed the political development between 1832 and 1841 and the birth of the new Tory party consequent upon it. Both the men and the

29. Langdon-Davies, p.xxv.

30. Brandes, p.216. Richard Monckton Milnes wrote of this: "Yet the novel closes just at the point when they start on their enterprise; and the practicality of... the arrangement remains as problematical as ever." Milnes, Edinburgh Review, Vol. LXXXVI (1847), p.142.

31. "The simple truth is, that the doctrines of Coningsby are a kind of counsel of perfection." T.H.S. Escott, "Political Novels," Fraser's Magazine, Vol.13 N.S. (1874), p.536.

party are young; they are "on the threshold of public life" (p.477), but not yet in it. How they will develop, how deal with the political problems of their day would be the subject of another novel. As John Holloway says, "Through his characters, Disraeli not only suggests... problems, but also indicates what frame of mind can hope to solve them."[32] What frame of mind, indeed, but not what solutions.

One of the unusual characteristics of Coningsby is that it moves from cynicism to innocence, reminiscent of the strangely reversed pattern of some of his earlier books, where, for example, the prematurely experienced Vivian Grey meets in Beckendorff the man he might have been in happier circumstances. The first half of Book I of Coningsby reveals an approach to political life devoid of any idealism at all; the second half shows as quite distinct the life of Coningsby and his friends at school. Though they discuss politics they do so privately, not in the presence of adults. Even there, the inclusion of Millbank, the son of an industrialist, in their company reveals their truer grasp of the coming balance of power. Coningsby had been mimicking his elders when he complained that his friends had invited "'an infernal manufacturer!'" (p.40) to breakfast, but he soon learns better. Later it is only at Rigby's insistence that Coningsby bows to Millbank's exclusion from the Montem dinner. Though the schoolboys are shown to be morally superior (compare the description of their friendships with those of, say, Lord Monmouth and his cronies), they are dominated by their elders;

32. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage (London, 1953), p.87. My underlining.

nor are they even aware at this stage how much they differ from them.

Both here and in Book II at Beaumanoir, Coningsby must play the auditor to the discussions of the adults, but the new generation, by their pondering on political morality and through the influence of others, especially Sidonia, begin haltingly to achieve a political philosophy. As they get older they gain the confidence to express their views and they come to dominate the latter half of the book. Kathleen Tillotson explains this reversal as part of a consistent pattern in Disraeli's work:

> His novels... exhibit his skill in making the best of both worlds: for the first half of the book the aristocratic hero is shownin fashionable society, in the second half in flight from it. That at bottom is the pattern of his novels from Coningsby onwards.33

In this case the retreat can be chartered by Coningsby's growing articulation of views opposed to those of his old Tory background. By Book VII, Ch. II, Coningsby and Millbank can have another private conversation about politics, but by Book VII, Ch. IV, they are astonishing Sir Joseph Wallinger with their opinions, and by Book VIII, Ch. III, Coningsby has to confront his grandfather with them. This chapter is in many ways the centre of the book; Coningsby has to refuse to stand for Parliament in Darlford, the constituency where his grandfather's influence is greatest. As Blake says of Coningsby and Sybil, "Both novels contain scenes which are, as it were, the quintessence

33. Kathleen Tillotson, Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (London, 1961), p.88.

of their theme. In Coningsby it is the confrontation between the hero and his grandfather, Lord Monmouth, the new generation facing the old."[34] One might add that it is the post-Reform Act Tory party facing the pre-Reform Act Tory party.

By bringing together the previously discussed ingredients of this novel - especially the external political events which structurally provide Coningsby with his raison d'être, the emphasis throughout the book on youth, with its immaturity and impotence, and the conclusion of the book before the hero's generation have been tried by action - one can see the causes of the almost blank characterization of Coningsby himself. Blake describes Coningsby as "curiously uninteresting, essentially passive, someone to whom things happen."[35] His role is essentially to be formed by events. This, of course, is not to say that the book is uninteresting, but the curious quality of Disraeli's novels may well come from the contrast between the unindividualised protagonist and the vital ebullient nature of the outer world. John Holloway talks of "Disraeli's sense of the brilliance and variety and colour of the world [which] finds expression not only in the details of incidents, but also in their juxtaposition," which he sees as essential to "clarify, and even... deepen" the serious part of his work.[36]

Coningsby is, of course, not the only person in the book whose role supersedes his interest as a character; he is supported

34. Blake, Disraeli, p.199.

35. Ibid.

36. Holloway, pp.106-7, 109.

by what Gosse calls "a type of the subsidiary figure."[37] Blake recognizes part of the type's function when he says, "Large sections of Disraeli's books are, indeed, conversation pieces uttered by persons who are 'humours' rather than individualized characters, e.g., the immortal Tadpole and Taper."[38] Cazamian refers precisely to one character, providing a similar interpretation: "He puts the character of Lord Fitz-Booby into Coningsby to represent 'stupid Toryism!'"[39] All this is, of course, true, but these characters have another structural function to perform, as may be shown by looking at a section of Book II. Ch. V is an attack on the Tamworth Manifesto, "an attempt to construct a party without principles" (p.119). It is a chapter purely of discussion, with no mention of any of the fictional characters. Ch. VI begins the translation of the argument into personal terms when Tadpole and Taper in their discussion of the political situation reveal their lack of political principles. "'And now for our cry,' said Mr. Taper.... 'Ancient institutions and modern improvements, I suppose, Mr. Tadpole?' 'Ameliorations is the better word; ameliorations. Nobody knows exactly what it means'" (p.102). In Ch. VII it is then possible for Disraeli to present the boys at Eton coming to political conclusions of a very different kind:

> all these were incidents or personal traits apt to stir the passions, and create in breasts not yet schooled to repress emotion, a sentiment even of enthusiasm. It is the personal that interests mankind, that fires their imagination, and wins their hearts. A cause is a great abstraction, and

37. Gosse, p.165.

38. Blake, Disraeli, p.212.

39. Cazamian, p.186.

> fit only for students; embodied in a party, it stirs man to action; but place at the head of that party a leader who can inspire enthusiasm, he commands the world. (p.106)

It is almost as if Disraeli were commenting upon his own technique. Though he will insist that abstract analysis is necessary, he must transmute that information into its personal influence, and Tadpole and Taper are his means: intermediate characters, neither abstractions not individualised, but a necessary force to bind the book together.[40] Mr. Jobson, in Book V, Ch. IV, is another case in point. He only occurs here where we see his vote being solicited in the Darlford election. His unwillingness to commit himself to either side provides the narrator with the introduction to the political analysis that follows. Rigby is perhaps the best example of the type; acutely observed, the complete toad-eater, Lord Monmouth's man. Book III, Ch. II, shows the kind of advice he is capable of offering Coningsby, and Coningsby's rejection of it is symptomatic of his growing rejection of the old Tory party.

40. This will remain a constant feature of Disraeli's work: such characters continue to appear, right up to Endymion, his last novel, where the political importance of Myra Ferrars' marriage is commented upon by "the Secretary of the Treasury [who] whispered to an Under-Secretary of State" (p.206). The election of 1841, which will be of such importance to Endymion because he will gain his Parliamentary seat then, is introduced by Tadpole: He "observed, with much originality, at the Carlton, they were dancing on a volcano" (p.291) and in Ch. LXXXIII the events leading up to the 1846 elections, and ultimately Endymion's first political office, are also introduced by Tadpole.

The complexity with which Disraeli presents some of the more fully realized characters comes more from the method of presentation than from within the characters themselves. Quite often two distinct attitudes are presented; for example, Henry Sydney's opinions on the vital importance of tradition and history are treated seriously most of the time, but mocked at others. Though Lord Everingham is not a sympathetic character, his remark that "'Henry [Sydney] thinks... that the people are to be fed by dancing round a May-pole'" (p.134) has an element of justice in it, and Sydney's own regret that "'Beaumanoir was not beseiged'" (p.141) during the Civil War makes his attitude to history difficult to take seriously. Buckhurst's new ideas on society are joined with his addiction to a new cut of trousers, and he too condemns himself from his own mouth: "'As for me, I never would enter into a conspiracy, unless the conspirators were fellows who had been at Eton with me'" (p.265).

Disraeli even extends the mockery to the whole philosophy behind their Young England-like group.

> "A sort of new set; new ideas and all that sort of thing".... "A sort of animal magnetism, or unknown tongues, I take it from your desciption," said his companion. "Well, I don't know what it is... but it has got hold of all the young fellows.... I had some idea of giving my mind to it... but it requires a devilish deal of history, I believe, and all that sort of thing." "Ah! that's a bore", said his companion .... I never could manage charades." (pp.390-1)

The wit here is pointed enough to make the reader secure in the belief that these young enthusiasts are being teased. But it also raises the question of how seriously Disraeli expects us to take the other, seemingly earnest manifestations of the Young England philosophy:

> It was merry Christmas at St. Geneviève. There was a yule log blazing on every hearth in that wide domain, from the hall of the squire to the peasants' roof.... All day long, carts laden with fuel and warm rainment were traversing the various districts, distributing comfort and dispensing cheer. For a Christian gentleman of high degree was Eustace Lyle.
>
> Within his hall, too, he holds his revel, and his beauteous bride welcomes their guests, from her noble parents to the faithful tenants of the house. All classes are mingled in the joyous quality that becomes the season, at once sacred and merry. There are carols for the eventful eve, and mummers for the festive day. (p.439)

Are we to take this seriously? (One might also look at the alms-giving in Book III, Ch. IV, which is written in a similar vein.) Is the prose over-ripe enough to suggest mockery, or should we agree with Eric Forbes-Boyd when he says that, "As always when his feelings as distinct from his intellect were deeply stirred, [Disraeli] is prone to fall into melodrama"?[41]

In an interesting essay discussing this very question, Bernard McCabe comments that "the novelist's attitudes are thoroughly ambiguous."[42] That last word should be ambivalent. Disraeli is not obscure, but quite positively presenting two attitudes. While McCabe is quite right to insist that "the temptation to rescue Victorian absurdities by discovering saving ironies must... be resisted," the conjunction of conflicting attitudes was to become so integral to Disraeli's novels, to be used so consistently, that I believe it cannot be dismissed.[43] Richard Faber writes that "Disraeli's mind was complex, at once romantic and ironical; it came naturally to him to mock and admire at the same time."[44] Although this is something I will discuss

41. Forbes-Boyd, p.115.

42. Bernard McCabe, "Disraeli and the 'Baronial Principle': Some Versions of Romantic Medievalism," Victorian Newsletter, No.34 (Fall 1968), p.9.

43. Ibid., p.11

44. Richard Faber, Beaconsfield and Bolingbroke (London, 1961) p.22.

more fully in relation to Lothair, where I think the technique is seen at its brilliant best, the ambivalence here is an early instance. The description of the Christmas festivities (and the alms-giving) is sincere, and sincere by virtue of the very lusciousness of its prose. Domain, squire, peasants, rainment, dispensing cheer, Christian gentleman of high degree, beauteous bride, faithful tenants, joyous equality and mummers: it is precisely such language which Disraeli uses to embody notions that he holds dear.[45] It is difficult to admire such language today and when Disraeli relies too much on it it is disastrous - The Wondrous Tale of Alroy is a case in point. It is wrong to look in it for realistic description, or a realistic programme of reform; but it is a sincere portrait of an ideal society towards which the enthusiasts aspire. To laugh at their excesses does not invalidate their goal, but both adds to the book's entertainment value and introduces an element of intelligent appraisal.

Disraeli's more fully realised characters are also required to fulfil a representative role. Richard Faber says of the political parties of the time,

> the novelists tended to draw a general distinction between Whig magnates on the one hand, wealthy and grand, with cultivated and cosmopolitan tastes and of relatively recent lineage; and on the other, Tory peers of ancient family, usually less grand and articulate, but in some rather obscure way incarnating

45. Additional proof may come from The Young Duke. To the hero's comment that now-a-days "'We are barbarians,'" May Dacre replies, "'We were not.... What are tableaux, or acted charades, or romances, to masques, which were the splendid and various amusement of our ancestors. Last Christmas we performed "Comus" here with great effect'" (p.102). There is no hint of mockery here at the notion of reviving traditional Christmas amusements.

national and traditional virtues.[46]

While Disraeli is drawing on a similar source, he makes a specific, rather than "a general distinction." One side of this division is represented by "the hereditary tenets of his Whig friend, Lord Vere" (p.105), "'Come, come, Coningsby,' said Lord Vere, the son of a Whig minister; 'I am all for Manchester and Birmingham'" (p.40), and the other side is represented by two friends, Eustace Lyle, a man of old family who has rejected his family's Whig connections and is busy restoring the old custom of almsgiving, and Henry Sydney, of equally old family, who respects the old orders of society, and rejects "the Spirit of the Age" (p.134) in favour of ancient ceremony.

Coningsby's mentors have a dual responsibility, which reflects his dual role. They are characters who influence the maturing boy and they are representative of factors in contemporary society: "He distinguished three individuals whose acquaintance had greatly influenced his mind; Eustace Lyle, the elder Millbank, above all, Sidonia... one of them a principal landed proprietor, another one of the most eminent manufacturers, and the third the greatest capitalist in the kingdom" (p.257). Here, as often, Disraeli is quite content openly to acknowledge his technique, by commenting on the function of his characters. Blake's interpretation of this phenomenon may well be correct: "The truth is that Disraeli lacked imagination.... The capacity to invent characters to get inside them and present their development, the power to

46. Richard Faber, Proper Stations: Class in Victorian Fiction (London, 1971), p.24.

put oneself into unfamiliar scenes and situations, everything that is meant by creative imagination, these were not Disraeli's forte."[47] But Disraeli's ability to turn this disability to use as a tool to make political history available to his readers is as worthy of praise.

Once Disraeli has established the significance of his characters, their interaction also gains significance. Cazamian says of Coningsby and Edith, "Their union is symbolic."[48] Speare spells it out in more detail: "the marriage of the hero to the daughter of Millbank presents another facet of the conviction that the future of England lies in the youth of the nobility and of the middle class."[49]

Many of these representative characters are strongly connected with place and with the responsibilities land-ownership brings. One might fruitfully compare St. Lyle's St. Geneviève with Millbank, and the industrialist's treatment of his employees with Lyle's of his tenants. But there is more general symbolic importance to place in Disraeli's novels, one that John Holloway has pointed out.[50] As early as 1831, thirteen years before Coningsby, Disraeli wrote.

> I never take the reader into the country merely for a change of air; but because at different houses, one sometimes catches a different trait. The politician and the sportsman, and the fashionist, have all their

47. Blake, Disraeli, p.219.

48. Cazamian, p.189.

49. Speare, p.74.

50. See Holloway, pp.91-2.

> caste; and although in the blending of society, these characters often meet, still at their mansions, and particularly in the provinces, the ruling passion will predominate. (C, p.271)

In 1847, three years after Coningsby he still maintained, "One should generally mention localities, because very often they indicate character."[51]

In Coningsby itself Disraeli was quite happy to reveal the connection between place and character: "The moral influence of residence furnishes some of the most interesting traits of our national manners" (p.147), and of these residences, one of the most important is Beaumanoir:

> There was not a country-house in England that had so completely the air of habitual residence.... It is a charming trait, and very rare.... How delightful was the morning room.... Such a profusion of flowers! Such a multitude of books!... So many easy chairs too, of so many shapes; each in itself a comfortable home. (pp.127-8)

Compare that description with this of Coningsby Castle: "It was visible for several miles before he even entered the park, so proud and prominent was its position, on the richly-wooded steep of a considerable eminence. It was a castellated building, immense and magnificent" (p.180).[52] Disraeli provided his own

51. Disraeli, Tancred, p.128.

52. Beaumanoir was taken at the time to represent Belvoir Castle home of the Duke of Rutland, who was in turn regarded as the Duke of the novel, father of Henry Sydney. In two personal letters of 1846 sent from Belvoir, Disraeli shows both his knowledge of the attribution, and how incorrect it is. To Sarah Disraeli, 10 August 1846:"I thought you would like to have a line from Beaumanoir, though it is not in the least like Beaumanoir, but Coningsby Castle to the very life." To Mary Anne Disraeli, 7 August 1846: "The scene, the weather, the castle on its wooded crag flushed in the sun - Coningsby to the life." Monypenny and Buckle, I.822.

interpretation of the contrast:

> Nothing could present a greater contrast than the respective interiors of Coningsby and Beaumanoir. The air of habitual habitation, which so pleasingly distinguished the Duke's family seat, was entirely wanting at Coningsby. Everything, indeed, was vast and splendid.... There were no books... few flowers; no pet animals.... The modes and manners of the house were not rural. (pp.200-1)

Coningsby Castle, of course, at this time is owned by Lord Monmouth, not Coningsby himself. The "traces of hasty and temporary arrangement; new carpets and old hangings; old paint, new gilding" (p.201) are surely a comment on the confusion of the party Monmouth supports, with its "ancient institutions and modern improvements" (p.102).

When Coningsby comes to set up house on his own, it is not here, but at Hellingsley, "one of the finest places in the country, with a splendid estate" (p.203). Its past history is stressed:

> One of those true old English Halls, now unhappily so rare, built in the time of the Tudors... surrounded by ancient and very formal gardens. The hall itself, during many generations, had been vigilantly and tastefully preserved by its proprietors. There was not a point which was not as fresh as if it had been renovated but yesterday. (p.360)

Its significance is that here the new life, coming about through the union of the new Tory party and the manufacturing classes, can grow to fruition - fresh, but with its roots in English antiquity.

In later works Disraeli was also to use places to render the novels' central ideas more concrete. Indeed to Donald Sultana, "descriptions of scenes of life in the great English country-houses [are] one of his distinct contributions to the nineteenth century novel."[53] Disraeli's consistency in writing about the upper rather than the middle classes meant that country estates were a continuous source of significant descriptions for him, but his description of the homes of the poor, or of Wodgate in Sybil, the frequent descriptions of London or Manchester, the gardens and Italian landscape in Lothair, all suggest that the country house was part of that wider use of place that he himself suggested.

Significantly, Sidonia first meets Coningsby at an inn. Because of his religion Sidonia is prevented from becoming an English land-owner. His characteristic setting is Paris, where his residence is described as "fantastic, glittering, variegated; full of strange shapes and dazzling objects" (p.337). Paris is not the novel's only city - they exist along with the rural estates. Again Disraeli makes clear their meaning: "A great city, whose image dwells in the memory of man, is the type of some great idea" (p.152), and Manchester is "the great METROPOLIS of LABOUR" (p.151). As Asa Briggs has pointed out, these ideas "are not as exceptional as they are sometimes taken to be. They were representative, indeed, of most contemporary social comment." It is clear that Coningsby's stay in Manchester persuades him of the power of industrialists and industrialization, and so helps to

53. Donald Sultana, Benjamin Disraeli in Spain, Malta and Albania 1830-2: A Monograph (London, 1976), p.13.

make him a modern Tory, not restricted to protecting the interests of the landowners. His "social education really started only when he... devoted several days to the 'comprehension of Manchester.'"[54]

He undergoes a further conversion in London. By then his grandfather has effectively disinherited him, and Coningsby has to decide what to do with his future:[55]

> Once more in the mighty streets, surrounded by millions, his petty griefs and personal fortunes assumed their proper position... Here was the mightiest of modern cities; the rival even of the most celebrated of the ancient. Whether he inherited or forfeited fortunes, what was it to the passing throng? They would not share his splendour, or his luxury, or his comfort. But a word from his lip, a thought from his brain, expressed at the right time, at the right place... might change their opinions, might affect their destiny.... "The greatness of this city destroys my misery," said Coningsby, "and my genius shall conquer its greatness!" (p.455)

In other words, the modern world is only conquerable by merit, not by right of inheritance, and it is this modern world which Coningsby and the new Tory party must deal with. All the areas of life with which the novel deals have their places: Youth at

54. Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities (London, 1963), p.89.

55. Samuel Butler comments rather wickedly on the degree of Coningsby's penury. Ernest Pontifex is offered a job at £300 a year: "I fixed upon this sum, because it was the one which Mr. Disraeli gave Coningsby when Coningsby was at the lowest ebb of his fortunes. Mr. Disraeli evidently thought £300 a year the smallest sum on which Coningsby could be expected to live, and make the two ends meet; with this, however, he thought his hero could manage to get along for a year or two. In 1862, of which I am now writing, prices had risen.... On the other hand Ernest had had less expensive antecedents than Coningsby, so on the whole I thought £300 a year would be about the right thing for him." Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh (New York, 1950), pp.479-80.

Eton, rural power at its best at Beaumanoir and at its worst at Coningsby Castle, religion at St. Geneviève and industry at Millbank and Manchester. But whereas the other scenes are descriptive of the concepts which they embody, only London - the modern city - actually takes part in the action by persuading Coningsby to stay and work out his future there. When one considers Coningsby in his role as the new Tory party, now cut off from his former ties, it is obvious that history must be a factor in his development, that the city of "the passing throng" demands its due of the post-Reform Act Tory.

At the end of Book VII Millbank has forbidden his family to enter the grounds of Coningsby Castle and Coningsby himself to see his daughter Edith. The two elements whose union is required to save England, industry and the nobility, are to be kept apart. Oswald Millbank escorts the sorrowing Coningsby homewards from his father's home at Hellingsley:

> and now Oswald himself was at the gates of that very domain with his friend who was about to enter them.... "I ought not to enter here...and yet there are duties more sacred even than obedience to a father...." A clap of thunder that seemed to make the park quake broke over their heads.... The Castle was close at hand; Oswald had avoided entering it; but the impending storm was so menacing that, hurried on by Coningsby, he could make no resistance.... The fork-lightning flashed and scintillated from every quarter of the horizon: the thunder broke over the Castle as if the keep were rocking with artillery: amid the momentary pauses of the explosion, the rain was heard descending like dissolving water-spouts.
>
> Nor was this one of those transient tempests that often agitate the summer. Time advanced, and its fierceness was little mitigated. Sometimes there was a lull, though the violence of the rain never appeared to diminish; but then, as in some pitched fight between contending hosts, when the fervour of the field seems for a moment to allay, fresh squadrons arrive and renew the hottest strife, so a low moaning wind that was now at intervals faintly heard bore up a great reserve of electric vapour, that formed, as it were, into field in the space between the Castle and Hellingsley, and then discharged its violence on that fated district. (pp.386-7)

Nature itself has forced the inevitable union. Though Oswald's entry into the Castle ultimately plays its part in Coningsby being disinherited by his grandfather (as indeed the book argues that the old Tory party was to be horrified at any attempt to make it include sources of wealth not based on land), it is their being together which will enable them (and England) to weather the storm: "Both felt happier in being together.... The storm had lulled, though the rain still fell; in the west was a streak of light" (p.388). Ultimately "the space between the Castle and Hellingsley... that fated district" (p.387, my underlining) will be bridged. It is in ways like these that the geographical imagery supports the central argument in the novel. The military imagery of the above is not picked up again in Coningsby which deals optimistically with the growth of a political movement to deal with the coming storm; in Sybil, however, the workers will actually march on the castle.

In this discussion of the techniques used by Disraeli I have attempted to show how the factors making up the argument have been isolated, represented and then seen interacting. Disraeli's characteristic strength, at least at this stage in his writing career, retrospective and theoretic analysis, has really come into its own. Interestingly, as his subject matter has become more complex, so he has begun to rely less on the simpler symmetrical methods of analysis described earlier. There are indeed occasions where contrasts are overt, events repeated; for example, Rigby has to tell Madame Colonna, and then in turn, her daughter Lucretia, that Lord Monmouth has discarded

them (see pp.292-5 and 424-7). Their respective reactions are no doubt telling, but the information that the reader gains by such techniques is slight when compared with that achieved by the methods described previously. To say that

> Nothing could be more exquisitely gracious than the daughter of Colonna was to-night; Flora, on the contrary, was rather agitated and embarrassed; and did not express her readiness with half the facility and the grace of Lucretia; but Flora's arm trembled as Coningsby led her to the piano... (p.226)

does place the two women respectively as examples of heartless grace and gauche sincerity, characterizations which will culminate in the former's attempt to deprive Coningsby of his fortune and the latter finally restoring it to him. But Disraeli achieves more by ensuring that Lucretia Colonna, Flora and Edith Millbank all appear in the book first as children, rather than young women. Significantly and damningly Lucretia is always of the adult world: "The young lady, who was really more youthful than Coningsby, but of a form and stature so developed that she appeared almost a woman, bowed to the guest" (p.21). Coningsby is fourteen at this time. Flora remains essentially childlike, essentially dependent, unable to join the adult world. Lord Monmouth calls her "'my good little girl'" (p.334) when she is fully grown and the description of her death again emphasizes that relationship: "The gentle and unhappy daughter of Lord Monmouth quitted a scene with which her spirit had never greatly sympathised" (p.476).

Edith Millbank, to be the consort of Coningsby, must be seen to share in the youthfulness which characterizes Coningsby and his friends - this surely is the reason for her introduction, "a young girl... with a wild unstudied grace" (p.164) when Coningsby first visits Millbank. Like Coningsby himself, however,

she must become a responsible adult, and unlike Lucretia Colonna and Flora she does make the change: "two years had... effected a wonderful change in the sister of his school-day friend, and transformed the silent, embarrassed girl into a woman of surpassing beauty and of the most graceful and impressive mien" (p.314), or later: "Coningsby could not but remember his dinner at Millbank, and the timid hostess whom he then addressed so often in vain, as he gazed upon the bewitching and accomplished woman whom he now passionately loved" (p.366). What we can understand by Disraeli's putting the three women into the context of youth and maturity which is so important in this novel, is much more than can be understood from a simple contrast of character.

There are examples of repetition to be found in Coningsby which remind us of Disraeli's earlier work: "'You are in the same position as your father; you meditate the same act'" (p.382), which here is marrying a commoner against Lord Monmouth's wishes. This is an economical way of reminding the reader of what would occur - a repetition of "a system of domestic persecution, sustained by the hand of a master, [which] had eventually broken up the health of its victim" (p.8); but little more than a reminder. In Contarini Fleming the son's repetition of events from his father's life is used to depict the warring sides of a divided nature.

The misunderstandings between Coningsby and Edith may remind us of Henrietta Temple. Coningsby first suspects that Edith and Sidonia are in love; then even after he and Edith have declared their love she is led to believe that "Lady Theresa Sydney... was going to be married, and to Mr. Coningsby" (p.402),

and before long Coningsby believes that "the heart that once had been his was now another's.... Edith was lost" (pp.413-4). However, in Coningsby Disraeli is not attempting the personal analysis which he had in Henrietta Temple or Contarini Fleming. In the former the engagements to others are real; there the personal aspects of faith and trust are examined. Here the political analysis demands that the new Tory party should become allied with the growing industrial power, so the rumours are false, the marriage inevitable.

Though Disraeli maintains deeply intelligent analysis as the touchstone of his books, it is apparent for the first time in Coningsby that he is able to integrate the methods he uses into a most impressive whole: the stress on youthful idealism can be related to political history, the hero's contribution to the political discussion can grow naturally as that of the narrator declines, the venue of the discussions and the age of the participants will all contribute to the reader's understanding of a revolutionary decade in English politics. This is where Disraeli's personal contribution to the novel lies, not in the ways often attributed to him. Partisan novels were not unusual at the time, nor those demanding reform. Many of them did consider religious belief to be necessary to any such reform. In the context of the Oxford Movement, and of the condition-of-England novel, Disraeli's concerns do not appear strange. Even his views on race are unique only in his putting a favourable complexion on contemporary opinions of the Jews as a race.[56] What

56. See Blake, Disraeli, pp.202-3.

is unusual is the depth of analysis and intellectual concern with which Disraeli was able to imbue the novel and which has since characterized the idea of the political novel.

CHAPTER FIVE: Sybil

To some critics, Sybil, published in 1845, only a year after Coningsby, deals with the same subjects as its predecessor: "Politics and ideas of history are the subject matter of Sybil."[1] The same writer elsewhere gives a somewhat modified definition: "We must see Coningsby and Sybil in the tradition of the rambling eighteenth century novel of ideas.... Disraeli was interested in ideas and the emotions generated by these ideas, so in Sybil he attempts to achieve a panoramic vision of society."[2] Other critics have extended the social interpretation even more precisely: "The 'degradation of the people' then, is the theme of Sybil";[3] and Cazamian implies a distinction between the two books when he writes of Coningsby that "the political vicissitudes of these nine years [1832-41] are examined exhaustively, while the depression which reached its climax in 1842 is barely touched on."[4] That depression and the subsequent rural and urban distress

1. Sheila M. Smith, Mr. Disraeli's Readers (Nottingham, 1966), p.9.

2. Sheila M. Smith, "Truth and Propaganda in the Victorian Social Problem Novel," Renaissance and Modern Studies, Vol.VIII (1964), pp.83-4.

3. T.E. Kebbel, Life of Lord Beaconsfield (London, 1888), p.50.

4. Cazamian, p.184.

form a major part of the action of Sybil. Philip Guedalla, however, thinks Disraeli does not take the social question far enough: "the spectre of industrialism was deftly raised: though the magician, when challenged to exorcise it, did little more than make picturesque and ineffectual passes."[5] Ironically Sybil is the very novel which has been used by some to counter similar criticisms of Coningsby: "Sybil was an answer... through the claim that we cannot solve those problems in the political and parliamentary sphere alone, but must study social conditions."[6]

While it would be wrong to deny that Sybil is of the "social problem" school of novels, it would be equally wrong to expect it to provide answers for the problems it reveals: "The narrator has the perspicacity to analyze England's problems, but he suggests no program for ameliorating the spiritual and moral condition of England."[7] Neither does the hero. Egremont "is far more successful as a theorizer and enunciator of political ideology than he is as a practical man of political change."[8] Disraeli's strength lay in analyzing problems, not in producing precise solutions. If we begin by looking at what the novel actually deals with, rather than what other social-problem novelists have made of similar materials, the author's characteristic strengths will become apparent.

5. Guedalla, p.193.

6. Hollis, p.106.

7. Daniel R. Schwarz, "Art and Argument in Disraeli's Sybil," Journal of Narrative Technique, Vol.4 (1974), p.29.

8. Levine, p.117.

Like many nineteenth-century English novels, Sybil takes pains to explain England to the English. The central speech which gives the book its sub-title, "The Two Nations," illustrates the ignorance which necessitates such explanations:

> "Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws."
> "You speak of -" said Egremont, hesitatingly.
> "THE RICH AND THE POOR." (pp.76-7)

Disraeli never allows this subject to disappear for long. Egremont says,

> "I was told... that an impassable gulf divided the Rich from the Poor; I was told that the Privileged and the People formed Two Nations, governed by different laws, influenced by different manners, with no thoughts or sympathies in common; with an innate inability of mutual comprehension. I believed that if this were indeed the case, the ruin of our common country was at hand." (p.283)

He talks of removing "the deep-fixed barriers of centuries of ignorance" (p.320). It is the central concept of the whole novel. Francis Hackett correctly emphasizes its importance: "In England an impassable gulf divides the Rich and the Poor.... This is his theme. He states it, exposes the facts behind it, dwells on it, insists on it, dramatizes it."[9] The aspect of this ignorance which is most easily recognizable concerns the condition of the people: "The condition of the people was a subject of which [Egremont] knew nothing" (p.55); it consists of "things of such vast import, but which had never crossed his mind" (p.152).

9. Francis Hackett, "Disraeli as a novelist," New Republic, Vol.135 (1956), p.27.

Though the object of his search is different from that of other Disraeli heroes, the fact that he is seeking to find a truth on which to base his life clearly puts Egremont in a line of heroes from Vivian Grey to Endymion.[10]

John Holloway recognizes Sybil's similarity to the rest of Disraeli's novels, and points out an important difference, when he says, "Every one of Disraeli's novels is centred upon a young man's growing to maturity, forming his views on the world, and finding his right place in it (Sybil is different only in that this happens to both the hero and the heroine)."[11] Sybil's education is in many ways more complex that Egremont's, for she has preconceptions that must be removed before she can appreciate the truth. She is a "maiden, walled out from sympathy by prejudices and convictions more impassable than all the mere consequences of class" (p.284). The National Petition is described as an "important document which had been the means of drawing forth Sybil from her solitude, and of teaching her something of that world... which she had so inaccurately preconceived" (p.337). She herself recognizes that the period in London "'has taught me some bitter truths.... I... have been wrong in all my judgements'" (p.338-9). Both the central characters know the classes from which they spring accurately, however. Egremont can lecture Sybil onthis: "'you are in error, Sybil.... [T]he class that calls itself your superior is not the same class as ruled in the time of your fathers'" (p.319), but he trusts her

10. Despite Brandes' remark: "For the first and only time Disraeli departed from his custom of seeking his heroes in the most wealthy circles, and interested himself in the cares and opinions of those who work for their bread." Brandes, p.216.

11. Holloway, p.106.

information about her own, describing her as "'my informant'" (p.174).

Beth R. Arnold claims that "Sybil is divided roughly into two periods of time, the pre-revolt period, in which the author established the down-trodden nature of the masses, and the period of the mob uprising, in which he demonstrates the relative ease with which a mob loses its innocence."[12] While there certainly is a break of three years before the riots of 1842 which are dealt with in Book VI, this temporal analysis over-emphasizes the role of the masses in the novel. There is another important break, from 1837 to 1839, between Books III and IV, whose significance should be noted. It separates those parts of the novel which deal with the education of the hero and heroine respectively. Egremont has to learn about the conditions of the working-class in Books I, II and III, and Sybil's parallel education about the upper classes occurs in Books IV and V. The novel may have begun in London, but it is significant for Egremont's education that it immediately moves to the provinces: "'I have come here to learn something of [the people's] condition .... That is not to be done in a great city like London. We all of us live too much in a circle'" (p.204). Although already an M.P., Egremont "could not resist the conviction that... his sympathies had become more lively and more extended... that he was inclined to view public questions in a light very different from that in which he had surveyed them a few weeks back, when on the

12. Beth R. Arnold, "Disraeli and Dickens on Young England," Dickensian, Vol.63 (1967), p.29.

hustings of his borough" (p.153). He receives enough information to bring about what Hackett calls "the golden lad's conversion."[13] At the beginning of Book IV the scene returns to London, the place where Sybil in her turn must learn about the aristocracy and the corrupting nature of power. She still has to learn that the Chartists can have their faults while Egremont shows the result of his education by speaking sympathetically of their cause in Parliament. Her journey through London in an attempt to save her father teaches her of the sinful degradation of the poor there, just as Egremont's visit to Warner's family in Mowbray has taught him their physical degradation. In the case of the former, Disraeli again clearly refers to his concept of the two nations. Sybil sees that "The houses, the population, the costume, the manners, the language, through which they whirled their way, were of a different state and nation from those with which the dwellers of the dainty quarters of this city are acquainted" (p.362). The climax of the novel in Book VI shows, in the physical conflict between rich and poor, Sybil helping to rescue the Mowbray family from the mob; it is her equivalent of Egremont's sympathetic speech.

The motif of ignorance lies behind more of the book than the development of the two central characters. Master Nixon supports the concept of the two nations when he says, "'Atween the poor man and the gentleman there never was no connection, and that's the wital mischief of this country'" (p.166), and Aubrey St. Lys is one of the few people attempting to rectify it. He

13. Hackett, p.27.

"'thinks it his duty to enter all societies. That is the reason why he goes to Mowbray Castle, as well as to the squalid courts and cellars of the town'" (p.172).

Disraeli deepens the picture of mutual ignorance between the "Two Nations" by a series of comparisons between the situation at home and abroad: "Infanticide is practised as extensively and as legally in England, as it is on the banks of the Ganges; a circumstance which apparently has not yet engaged the attention of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" (p.129); the conditions of women down the mines "seem to have escaped the notice of the Society for the Abolition of Negro Slavery. Those worthy gentlemen too appear to have been singularly unconscious of the sufferings of the little trappers, which was remarkable, as many of them were in their own employ" (p.161). The adult miners are described: "with their sable countenances and ivory teeth, they really looked like a gang of negroes at a revel" (p.162). When Morley realises how little religion there is in Wodgate he thinks, "'Ah! me... and could not they spare one Missionary from Tahiti for their fellow-countrymen at Wodgate!'" (p.193). One final example: the gentleman in Downing Street says of a deputation:

> "If there be any dissenters of the deputation, who, having freed the negroes, have no subject left for their foreign sympathies, hint at the tortures of the bull-fight and the immense consideration to humanity, that, instead of being speared at Seville, the Andalusian Toro will probably in future be cut up at Smithfield." (p.403)

They serve both to reveal how "foreign" sections of England are, and to condemn those who are concerned with foreign injustices at the expense of greater distress at home. This pattern of comparison has been felt but not directly acknowledged by critics; one contemporary reviewer wrote of Disraeli as "a traveller... who setting out from the salons of the luxurious, penetrates the dark and unknown regions of the populace. Africa is not so unknown to many a duke as the manners, habits, and feelings of the inhabitants of Wapping," and twenty years later another said, "Mr. Disraeli knew the working classes as a traveller knows the botany of a strange country."[14] In 1949 R.J. Cruikshank agreed: Disraeli "writes like a traveller returned from far-off lands who bravely expects civilised society to credit his tales of the anthropophagi, the dwarfs who carry their heads under their arms and eat their fellow men."[15]

Disraeli makes his series of international references do more than merely illustrate another facet of the all-pervading ignorance. The coincidence of the Jamaica Bill and the rejection of the Chartists' National Petition is used by Disraeli as a prime example of the conflict between the attitudes that have been illustrated above:

> The attention of the working classes was especially called by their leaders to the contrast between the interest occasioned by the endangered constitution of Jamaica, a petty and exhausted colony, and the claims for the same constitutional rights by the

14. Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine, Vol. 1 (1845), p.558; W. Minto, "Mrs Gaskell's Novels," Fortnightly Review, Vol.24 N.S. (1878), p.356.

15. R.J. Cruickshank, Charles Dickens and Early Victorian England (London, 1949), p.55.

> working millions of England. In the first instance, not a member was absent from his place; men were brought indeed from distant capitals to participate in the struggle and to decide it; the debate lasted for days, almost for weeks.... The mean position which the Saxon multitude occupied, as distinguished from the Jamaica planters, sunk deep into their hearts. (pp.328-9)

There is a further way in which foreign references develop Disraeli's theme. Richard Faber has commented that, "already interested in race, Disraeli draws a contrast between the 'Saxon industry' of the peasantry and the 'Norman manners' inherited, or acquired by the upper classes,"[16] and there are numerous simple examples of this - from water, seen as "the drink of Saxon kings" (p. 94), to aristocratic power at Westminster, described as "Norman conquerors and feudal laws" (p.336), and "'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work'" defined as a slogan which "sounds cheerful to the Saxon race" (p.435), the range of reference is wide. But the definition of racial interests at home can be specifically related to international commitments. Victoria is a queen who

> rules over the land that the great Macedonian could not conquer; and over a continent of which even Columbus never dreamed... of every sea, and of

16. Faber, Proper Stations, p.89. In Sybil, which, while desiring national unity, describes division, the contrast between the races is emphasised. Although Disraeli's unfinished novel Falconet is too short for its ultimate subject (nihilism?) to be clear, the relationship between Saxon and Norman is touched on in a totally different manner, and is no longer a source of disunity: "He was handsome; the highest order of English beauty; the Norman tempered by the Saxon." Disraeli, Falconet, published as an Appendix in Monypenny and Buckle, II. 1534-5.

> nations of every zone.... Will it be her proud destiny at length to... break the last links of the chain of Saxon thraldom? (p.47-8)

Another complex link which connect simultaneously the Saxon race, international references and the place of religion in the lives of the poor is seen in the following:

> The people of Marney took refuge in conventicles, which abounded; little plain buildings of pale brick, with the names painted on them of Sion, Bethel, Bethesda; names of a distant land, and the language of a persecuted and ancient race; yet such is the mysterious power of their divine quality, breathing consolation in the nineteenth century to the harrassed forms and the harrowed souls of Saxon peasantry. (p.63)

Such interwoven references do not constitute the argument of the novel, but they do produce the texture to substantiate it. Notice also in the above quotation how the actual names can have little meaning to the people, since they come from "a distant land" - yet they have a "mysterious power." This is the aspect of the novel I want to look at next.

The idea of ignorance pervades the book in many ways, primarily through secrets and "mysteries." Though many Victorian novelists used an element of mystery in their works, there are many more here than one might expect. Some are almost dragged in. Consider two of the most dramatic incidents: Sybil's search through the back streets of London for her father and the other Chartist delegates would never have occurred had Morley not kept their meeting place a secret. She would never have been at Mowbray Castle when it was attacked had not Lord de Mowbray kept "the question of the controverted inheritance... a secret

to every member of the family except himself" (p.469). There are numerous small mysteries throughout the novel. Who was Egremont's mysterious assailant," his dark enemy" (p.232)? (Long after the attack Stephen Morley confesses, "'We have struggled together before, Egremont'" (p.482).) Who is the "young peer of great estate" (p.39), who marries Egremont's first love? (We have to wait over a hundred pages until Egremont curses his brother - "'You have been the blight of my life; you stole from me my bride'" (p.178).) Who is the "man in a loose white great coat, his countenance concealed by a shawl," who pressed Sybil's hand "with great tenderness" (p.387)? (This time it is only a page before he is revealed as Egremont.) Who is the "Chartist leader" who had "been residing for some time at Wodgate, ever since the distress had become severe, and had obtained a great influence and popularity" (p.433), and who is the Liberator's advisor? (Three chapters later we learn that he is the "young man who had been a member of the Convention in '39 with Morley, afterwards of the Secret Council with Gerard, the same young man who had been the first arrested on the night that Sybil was made a prisoner" (p.450).) Why does Egremont disguise himself as Mr. Franklin? Who is the true heir to the Mowbray title and fortune?

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above examples. The first is that these incidents in the plot ought to be recognized as an extension of the theme of ignorance. They are all questions which either the reader or the characters or both cannot answer when they are posed, and along with the more overt discussions of ignorance they create within the book an atmosphere of uncertainty, an atmosphere which makes the reader rely on the

author to provide answers, specifically to those questions, and in a much more general way to the social problems the novel describes.

What should also be noticed is that in every case the mysteries are resolved. Though Brandes may write, "The childish and conventional optimism with which Disraeli's novels finish up, is almost irritating to the reader,"[17] in this novel at least the optimism about the future for Sybil and Egremont has been prepared for as the mysteries which surround them are clarified. Egremont became Mr. Franklin "'to live without suspicion among my fellow-subjects who were estranged from me.... I could not have done that without suspicion, had I been known; they would have recoiled from my class and my name'" (p.283). Once this purpose has been served, Egremont reassumes his proper identity. Sybil has been living among the people equally falsely. Raymond Williams is surely right to say that "The actual process of the book is the discovery that she is a dispossessed aristocrat,[18] but her position has also been regularized by the end of the novel. One man's ignorance of another is the indictment of contemporary society that Disraeli repeats throughout the novel. Sybil: "'I wish no mysteries'" (p.342), or "'There is no wisdom like frankness'" (p.287), and Egremont: "'Ah! there is much to know!'" (p.202). Only when they know the truth about each other is a happy future possible. Knowledge is repeatedly offered as the prerequisite of power, either for good or evil. Characteristically it is the powerful Baptist Hatton who "had acquired, from his

17. Brandes, p.229.

18. Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950 (London, 1958), p.100.

severe habits of historical research, a respect only for what was authentic" (p.291), and who knows himself to have "'knowledge that can make the proudest tremble'" (p.292). When Stephen Morley hears of the existence of documents proving Gerard's ancestry, he says, "'It is knowledge; it is power; great knowledge, great power'" (p.399).

In saying that all the mysteries are resolved, I do not want to suggest that Disraeli is offering simple answers. Every time a mystery is cleared up, the overall picture becomes more complex, as the ties between both individual people and the classes of society are seen to be closer and stronger--for example between the two Hattons, one bent on the destruction of Mowbray Castle, one on restoring it to the rightful heirs, who yet have to be recognized as brothers. Brandes says of them that "Disraeli is very successful in depicting lawless violence and worldly wisdom, and in throwing light on each by the contrast,"[19] but one only makes the comparison because they are brothers - a comparison achieved through a typically Disraelian pair of "doubles."

Often the method by which the mysteries are allowed to continue as long as they do is simply Disraeli's omission of the name of the character at his introduction: so Egremont's attacker is the "dark enemy," his rival is the "young peer of great estate," and the Liberator's henchman is a "Chartist leader," until it becomes necessary to identify them. But there are many

19. Brandes, p.229.

other minor instances of this mannerism. Perhaps the most frequently used description is "stranger," eminently suitable in view of the book's major contention, that neither half of society knows the other. Walter Gerard is "the stranger" (p.70) to Egremont at their first meeting, and Stephen Morley, "the younger of the strangers" (p.175); their identities are not revealed even to the reader for two chapters. At the same meeting, Sybil sees that her father and Morley are "in conversation with a stranger" (p.86), and she can still regard Egremont as "that stranger" (p.317) after the deception about his identity has been removed. When Nixon and his fellow colliers attempt to discuss their conditions, they are joined by "a voice from a distant corner" (p.164), who is later addressed, "'I take it you be a stranger is these parts, sir, or else you would know that it's as easy for a miner to speak to a main-master, as it is for me to pick coal with this here clay'" (p.166). The connection is made between ignorance, social division and being a stranger. Two chapters later this stranger is revealed as Stephen Morley.

Morley's motives remain a mystery; almost his last words are, "'Why I am here is a mystery; let it remain so. The world will misjudge me'" (p.482). He never becomes more than a walking emblem. His final appearance in the novel is described thus: "the votary of Moral Power and the Apostle of Community ceased to exist" (p.482).[20]

20. Beth Arnold writes of "Disraeli's failure to recognize a need for significance in the sacrifice of Stephen Morley.... [T]here are disturbing irregularities in Disraeli's conception of Morley"; but while one accepts her feeling of unease about the character it is surely caused by the regularity with which Disraeli invests him with significance, while leaving him without convincing human motivation. Arnold, p.28.

At first Sybil herself has no name. "She was apparently in the habit of a Religious" (p.77) and she soon becomes to Egremont "the beautiful Religious" (p.87) - though when they meet again in London, Egremont lingers "so that the stranger... might overtake him" (p.268).

Hatton of Wodgate has different appellations: early in the book he is the Bishop and later the Liberator. His brother is, by contrast, described as "the creator and counsellor of peers" (p.453) at their first meeting after years of silence. Their kinship is never revealed to the Liberator, interestingly enough. One feels that Disraeli would not have been capable of dealing with his reactions. The importance of this double appellation will become clear later on when I will discuss the role of religion in the novel, and its connection with the people's cause.

In Book IV, Ch. V, by constantly referring to the Chartists as "a deputation" or the "delegates" (e.g., p.256), Disraeli is able to keep the confrontation between Morley and Gerard on the one hand, and Morley and Egremont on the other, as much a surprise to the reader as it is to the characters.[21] Later the reader shares Sybil's approbation of the M.P. who spoke sympathetically of the Chartists - "the voice of a noble... who upheld the popular cause" and is surprised to discover that "the orator"

21. This is exactly paralleled in Lothair, where, throughout Ch. LI, no known characters are named but only referred to as the General, the staff or the troops, in order that Lothair's presence with the revolutionaries, as Captain Muriel, will come as a surprise to the reader.

is Egremont (p.337).[22] The method by which Egremont's deception is revealed in the former incident, and his sympathy with the people is revealed in the latter, are identical.

It is not only the narrator who uses this device. Even the characters talk of themselves and others by the roles they play as much as by their names. "'We are strangers... but would not be such'" is how St. Lys introduces himself and Egremont to Warner. He then extends the description through further definitions: "'I am your spiritual pastor, if to be the vicar of Mowbray entitles me to that description!'"(p.141). Even the fact that Lord de Mowbray will leave his fortunes to his elder daughter is couched in terms of role: "'Old Mowbray will make an elder son out of his elder daughter'" (p.145). Hatton recollects that "he was addressing the daughter of a chartist delegate" (p.286). In one passage Morley refers to Egremont as "this aristocrat," Gerard as the "great orator" and himself as "a man of the closet" (pp.287-8), using no proper names.

When Mr. Franklin's real identity is revealed to Sybil it is as "'the brother of Lord Marney'" (p.284) not as Egremont, and she later thinks of him as "A Norman, a noble, an oppressor of the people, a plunderer of the church" (p.318). She speaks of herself in the third person: "'Oh! my father, your child is most unhappy'" (p.343). The convolutions of this approach can become almost comic. When Egremont's warning of imminent danger to her

22. The complimentary description of "orator" has previously been given to Gerard, her father. This scene is very reminiscent of The Young Duke, Book V, Ch. IX, where May Dacre hears of the Duke's speech in the Lords in favour of Catholic Emancipation.

father is found to be true, Sybil says, "'A friend... a kind, good friend... warned me of all this,'" but Morley suspects the friend to be a "'traitor....this false aristocrat.'" One is hardly surprised when Sybil has to ask, "'Of whom and what do you speak?'" (p.350). Their conversation continues in similar vein, with Sybil begging Morley to "'Speak of one who is my father, if no longer your friend'" (p.354), and him offering "'I am ready... to save the father from death and the daughter from despair'" (p.354). One can even find a mixture of a character and the narrator using the device within a single sentence: "'Come on, my prime Doggy;' and nodding to the Chartist to follow him, the Liberator left the room" (p.454).

It would not be wrong, I think, to regard this dual presentation, of character and of role, as a development of that system of doubles which I have illustrated earlier. Egremont is both himself and Mr. Franklin, Sybil both the daughter of a Chartist delegate and an aristocrat. Nor need one look far to find the reason for the prevalence of this method of indirect presentation. These roles are ways of keeping people apart, stopping them from seeing the actual person before them, emphasizing their ignorance. The whole movement of the book is ultimately optimistic, as it entails discarding the roles and substituting personal recognition. The prime example of this, of course, is the revelation of Egremont's true identity to Sybil; but one might cite as a smaller instance Dandy Mick's initiation into the Trades Union. At the beginning of the scene he is described as "a stranger" but afterwards everyone unmasks and he is among

friends.[23] The scene between Sybil and Morley referred to above, which is full of such evasions, is one of moral blackmail, and the violent denouement is largely brought about by people acting according to the roles into which they have been cast - the mob, the Hellcats, etc. What is saved from the violence significantly comes through personal recognition. The Trafford factory is spared by the mob when they recognize Gerard, and the Mowbrays escape when Sybil gains the assistance of men known to her personally: "They recognised her, they paused. 'I know you, Couchman.... Why, I know you all!'" (p.474). The incident which culminates in the deaths of Gerard and Lord Marney shows the reverse of such recognition. Lord Marney "encountered a great multitude, now headed for purposes of peace by Walter Gerard. His mind inflamed by the accounts he had received... his lordship resolved without enquiry or preparation immediately to disperse them" (p.480; my underlining). Here the substitution of the role of mob-leader instead of the recognition of Gerard himself is connected with and seen as part of the ignorance which Disraeli is at such pains to condemn. Perhaps one more example of the interweaving of these strands might be given: "She beheld him with no little interest; this mysterious name that had sounded so often in her young ears, and was associated with so many strange and high hopes, and some dark blending of doubt and apprehension and discordant thoughts" (p.285). The elements of mystery and misconception are here, and significantly

23. It has often been said that "Disraeli shared the common prejudices" against Trade Unions, but the movement towards recognition here and the use of religious imagery discussed later lead me to think otherwise. See Williams, p.99. The attack on secret societies in Lothair has been similarly exaggerated.

connected with names.

In a novel in which mysteries abound, in which anonymous characters are often characterized by their roles and where they themselves use convoluted forms of address to emphasize these non-personal relationships, what names or titles they do have will be significant. Hatton's presence in the book ought to make that clear:

> "He has made more peers of the realm than our gracious Sovereign.... He is an heraldic antiquary; a discoverer inventor, framer, arranger of pedigrees; profound in the mysteries of genealogies... startling and alarming the noblest families in the country by claiming the ancient baronies which they have often assumed without authority, for obscure pretenders, many of whom he has succeeded in seating in the parliament of his country." (p.273)

He it is who converts Sir Vavasour Firebrace from his delightful notion of regaining the antique rights of the baronets, with their badges, their costumes and, more to our point, with "'our rightful claims in our petitions, as for "honorary epithets, secondary titles, personal decorations, and augmented heraldic bearings"'"(p.59), and persuades him "'Your claim on the barony of Lovel is good: I could recommend your pursuing it, did not another more inviting still present itself. In a word, if you wish to be Lord Bardolf, I will undertake to make you so'" (p.279).

Sybil's own name is incorrect in as much as she ought to have a title, and Egremont becomes "that Mr. Franklin whom [Sybil] had never quite forgotten, and who, alas! was not Mr. Franklin after all" (p.347). A similar misuse of names can be recognized throughout the novel, including those of the lower classes: it is noticeable that they do not have "correct" names, or if they do, they do not

use them. On the lowest rank, the homeless in London are called "those nameless nothings" (p.387). Then there is "John Trottman, though that was but a vulgar appellation, lost in his well-earned and far-famed title of Chaffing Jack" (p.105). In his trade he has learned the importance both of names -

> "'two American gentlemen from Lowell singing out for sherry cobler; don't know what it is; give them our bar-mixture; if they complain, say it's the Mowbray slap-bang, and no mistake. Must have a name, Mr. Morley; name's everything; made the fortune of the Temple; if I had called it the Saloon, it never would have filled, and perhaps the magistrates never have granted a license '" (p.107) -

and of titles - "'Beg pardon, Mr. Morley... but [I] saw one of the American gentlemen brandishing his bowie-knife against one of my waiters; called him Colonel; quieted him directly; a man of his rank brawling with a help; oh! no; not to be thought of'" (p.108).

There is a young filemaker at Wodgate: "'They call me Tummas, but I ayn't got no second name'" (p.192). There is Devilsdust, "the familiar appellation of a young gentleman who really had no other, baptismal or patrimonial'" (p.112). He had received that name when he first began to work: "The nameless one was preferred to the vacant post, received even a salary, more than that, a name: for as he had none, he was christened on the spot DEVILSDUST" (p.114). His associate, Dandy Mick, is more often referred to by that nickname than by his full name Mick Radley, until the end of the book, and significantly when he and Devilsdust finally establish themselves in business they begin to use full names:

> Devilsdust, having thus obtained a position in society, and become a capitalist, thought it but a due homage to the social decencies to assume a decorous appellation, and he called himself by the name of the town where he was born. The firm of Radley, Mowbray and Co., is a rising one; and will probably furnish in time a crop of members of Parliament and peers of the realm. (p.487)

This can be seen as another example of the confirmation of their rightful position, not really different from Sybil and Egremont assuming their rightful roles and names; equally optimistic and symbolic of the resolution of difficulties.

This picture is largely reversed when one looks at those of the upper classes who have names which they do not deserve. The use of contemporary history in the novel will be discussed later, but it ought not to be confused with the fictitious family histories with which Disraeli endows most of the aristocratic families. There are numerous examples: Egremont's own family, moving from Baldwin Greymount, who assisted in the dissolution of the monasteries, to Baron Marney, eventually to become Earls, in Book I, Ch. III; the Mowbray family, begun by a club waiter, name of Warren, becoming first a baronet, then an Irish baron, finally an English peer with the Norman name of Lord Fitz-Warene, in Book II, Ch. VII. The background of the Duke of Fitz-Acquitaine, only possibly a royal bastard, is sketched in Book II, Ch. XV, and that of the Marquis of Deloraine, founded recently, and that by a lawyer, in Book IV, Ch. II. Mr. Tubbe Sweete is revealed as "the son of a Jamaican cooper" (p.287), and the antecedents of Sir Charles Featherly and Colonel Cockawhoop are similarly exposed in Book IV, Ch. VII. The accounts of the

historical background of this pseudo-aristocracy allow Disraeli scope to explain England's contemporary ills with many of the same arguments that he employed in Coningsby, but I think it would be wrong to regard this similarity as of the first importance. It is more correctly an extension of Sybil's vision of England peopled with groups of strangers, not understanding each other, surrounded by mysteries, supporting unreal identities.

The attack on this pretended aristocracy does not mean that there are no real aristocrats nor old families. Aubrey St. Lys is the "younger son of the most ancient Norman family in England" (p.123), and Walter Gerard can say, "'we were tall men in King John's reign, as I have heard say'" (p.200). Lord Valentine, whom the Chartist delegates meet in London, puts up the best defence of the nobles' position:

> They have mainly and materially assisted in making England what it is. They have shed their blood in many battles; I have had two ancestors killed in the command of our fleets. You will not underrate such services, even if you do not appreciate their conduct as statesmen, though that has often been laborious, and sometimes distinguished. The finest trees in England were planted by my family; they raised several of your most beautiful churches; they have built bridges, made roads, dug mines, and constructed canals, and drained a marsh of a million of acres which bears our name to this day, and is now one of the most flourishing portions of the country. (p.260)

Significantly these are the really old families; those who existed in that view of history from which Disraeli claimed the reformed and reforming leaders of Young England would arise.

But even this notion of aristocracy is extended by Disraeli. When Egremont suggests that "'a great family rooted in the land,

has been deemed to be an element of political strength,'" Gerard answers, "'There is a great family in this country, and rooted in it, of which we have heard much less than they deserved.... I mean the PEOPLE'" (p.158). Earlier the monks have been cast in the role of a land-owning family:

> " The monastery, too, was a proprietor that never died and never wasted.... How proud we are still in England of an old family, though, God knows, 'tis rare to see one now. Yet the people like to say, We held under him, and his father and his grandfather before him: they know that such a tenure is a benefit. The abbot was ever the same. " (p.72)

In this way the common people, presently nameless, are seen to have as prestigious a background as the true aristocracy, though only too often the aristocracy's present representatives are unworthy of their prestige.

Disraeli has extended each character by defining what his role is, was, or will be, and this positive method of keeping the book's major concerns constantly before the reader is only available because Disraeli's characters are not highly individualised. As Blake notes, "The characters are sociological case studies rather than individuals."[24] That many of the characters in Sybil are types has been frequently recognized, not least by Disraeli himself. He says of Lord Deloraine, "He might have been selected as the personification of aristocracy" (p.240). H.D. Traill noted that Disraeli "has in every case aimed at the typical rather than the individual; he has sought to be true to an intellectual

24. Blake, "Disraeli's Political Novels," p.464.

conception rather than faithful to an observed object."[25] Guedalla finds this a drawback: "for the most part we keep the more dispiriting company of 'types' - types of Whig nobleman, of employers good or bad, of Chartist agitators, place-hunters and working men."[26] Langdon-Davies, while accepting the presence of types, would produce a different list: "it is more the types than the individual which Disraeli is endeavouring to portray.... [A] few main typical characters dominate the action and to them are stictly subordinated the crowded scenes of London life and of Lancashire manufacturing centre."[27]

What use Disraeli makes of his types has not always been so unanimously defined. Speare says the novel deals with "ideas rather than individualities,"[28] but does not acknowledge that it is often the non-individualized characters that enable Disraeli to keep the ideas to the fore. Throughout the novel there is a range from the purely typical (significantly Tadpole and Taper reappear from Coningsby) to the more individualised - though even these latter have a typical quality which Disraeli can make use of. He manages a consistent movement from one group to another, from the general to the individual. This is a typical Disraelian progression: "They come forth: the mine delivers its gang and the pit its bondsmen; the forge is silent and the engine is still. The plain is covered with the swarming multitude: bands of stalwart men... wet with toil, and black as the children of the tropics" (p.161). This general descriptioncontinues until "A small party

25. H.D. Traill, Introduction to Sybil (London, 1895), p.xviii.

26. Guedalla, p.195.

27. B.N. Langdon-Davies, Introduction to Sybil, Young England Edition (London, 1904), pp.xvi-xvii.

28. Speare, p.71.

of miners approached a house of more pretension than the generality of the dwellings... announcing its character by a flagrant sign of the Rising Sun" (p.162). One of this band is described as "he who seemed their leader" (p.163) and named - Master Nixon - though none of the others are. They discuss the iniquities of the "tommy" system, until Stephen Morley, at first only designated as "a voice from a distant corner" (p.164) joins the conversation. The transition from general to individual is continued as the plot itself is advanced by the directions of Hell-house Yard which Stephen Morley needs. In this way the documentary picture of England constantly surfaces through the novel and can be seen as part of the motivating force. One further example, this time from the upper classes, will be useful. Book IV, Ch. III, begins in the House of Commons: "'Strangers must withdraw.' 'Division: clear the gallery. Withdraw'"(p.243). This anonymous announcement is followed by a discussion of the chances for the vote, by unnamed characters, only defined as "a Conservative whipling" or "the under-whip" (p.243), and then the reactions of several minor characters (Lord Milford, Mr. Ormsby, Mr. Berners, etc.) to the division are described.[29] Moving nearer to the characters in whom we might be expected to take a personal interest, the chapter next reveals Lady St. Julians, Lady Deloraine and Lady Firebrace discussing the division, and by the end of the chapter Egremont joins his mother and her friends, and his position in the debate is illuminated by the "typical" background with which the chapter had begun.

29. This pattern, even using some of the same characters, remains consistent to the end of Disraeli's writing career. In Chapter 97 of Endymion, his last completed novel, Mr. Ormsby and Mr. Cassilis discuss Endymion's chances of marrying Lady Montfort, and the financial rewards it would bring; since this is exactly the "root in the country" that Endymion needs politically, the gossip gives the political background to a personal decision.

Certain individuals bear the brunt of this technique. Dandy Mick and Devilsdust provide a commentary on the conditions and aspirations of the working classes. The presentation of Devilsdust in particular has been liable to criticism. There may be some truth in J.A. Froude's description of his presentation as "like a chapter of Isiah in Cockney novelist dress," but Patrick Brantlinger is wrong when he writes of the same passage, "His salvation comes when good luck guides him, still only an infant, through the gates of a factory and into a job.... Disraeli suggests that the factories afford protection to children who would otherwise be neglected and abused by their working-class parents."[30] One need hardly point out that the section to which he refers is ironic. Sheila M. Smith has a much finer perception of how the passage works when she says:

> Devilsdust is described in relation to the many others who were less lucky than he, so that the reader is aware of the predicament of a whole society. The description of the child is deliberately distanced from the reader... and a vein or irony runs through the whole paragraph.... There is no attempt to put the reader in the child's place or to emphasize the emotional importance of objects and events in the child's life.... It would not further Disraeli's purpose in Sybil to identify himself with Devilsdust.... In the novel he deliberately establishes a... relationship with the reader which enables him to move easily from dialogue to description to rhetoric.... The portrait of Devilsdust does not argue coldness or lack of interest on Disraeli's part. Sybil is a prophetic and rhetorical novel and it is perverse to persist in judging it as a domestic novel.[31]

Dandy Mick and Devilsdust are part of the mechanism which allows Disraeli to move from the particular and fictional to the general and factual. They perform a similar function to that of Tadpole and Taper on a higher social plane. The latter are augmented by

30. J.A. Froude, The Earl of Beaconsfield (London, 1890), p.123; Patrick Brantlinger, "Tory-Radicalism and 'The Two Nations' in Disraeli's Sybil," Victorian Newsletter, No.41 (Spring 1972), p.15.

31. Smith, "Truth and Propaganda," pp.87-8.

Egerton, Berners, *et al.*, who are often found in the company of unnamed characters. (See *e.g.* Book V, Ch. I, where they discuss the social unrest with "a grey-haired gentleman," "a Warwickshire peer" and "several gentleman" (pp.324-5). Typical of this technique is the existence of the group of M.P.s whom the Chartists visit in Book IV, Ch. V - Lord Milford (not yet up), Mr. Thorough Base (not at home), Mr. Kremlin (only concerned with foreign affairs), Wriggle (playing both sides) Bombastes Rip (rising socially), Floatwell (cannot be pinned down), Mr. Kits (currency reform) and Lord Valentine. The interviews between the above and "the delegation" not only allow the final meeting in the series, between Morley and Gerard and Egremont, to remain a surprise, but equally importantly illustrate the attitudes which both sides have to cope with. In just such a manner Coningsby's lack of individuality facilitated Disraeli's portrait of the growth of the new Tory party. Disraeli sacrifices character study, one of the novelist's traditional strengths, to ensure that the argument of the book is foremost.

Blake suggests that Disraeli could not attempt character-creation, that he lacked imagination and used models for his fictional characters:

> Disraeli began his literary career as author of a *roman à clef*, and never quite got away from this literary genre. Even his seemingly most fantastic inventions like Sir Vavasour Firebrace in *Sybil*, the man who sought to revive the non-existent rights of baronets to sit in Parliament, were copied from life. There really was a man, Sir Richard Broun, author of *Broun's Baronetage*, who pursued this unpromising cause. He also wrote a book with the intriguing title *The Precedence of Honourable Baronetesses*.[32]

32. Blake, *Disraeli*, p.219.

Sheila M. Smith not only makes a different identification (seeing Firebrace as Sir Henry Vavasour, Bt.) but explains it thus:

> This is a good example of Disraeli's giving his readers the pleasure of a satirical portrait of a thinly disguised public figure, yet using the pleasure of gossip for a serious purpose in the novel. Sir Vavasour Firebrace is an aristocrat who is solely concerned with the privileges of his order, not with his duties, and acts as a foil for Egremont who learns that a position of privilege should bring its responsibilities. [33]

No doubt he does fulfil the latter function, but to argue that Disraeli uses gossip about a thinly disguised public figure to entertain his readers is not convincing. The many conflicting "keys" to his works suggest that the public figures are quite heavily disguised, and thus, presumably, incapable of producing the amusement she implies. But even if we accept that Firebrace has an actual counterpart in real life, or if we believe Monypenny and Buckle's identification of St. Lys as Father Frederick Faber,[34] it still remains for us to understand the character's role, not to believe that in making an identification we have said anything about the novel as a novel.

There is one occasion, however, when the identification of a character constitutes understanding his fictional role. One can say with impunity that the "gentleman in Downing Street on the 5th of August, 1842" (p.400) is Sir Robert Peel. By 1845 Disraeli the politician had moved even further from the leader of

33. Smith, Mr. Disraeli's Readers, p.32n.

34. Monypenny and Buckle, I.568.

his party, and this is a more bitter picture of Peel than the one in Coningsby. But the caricature has a more important function than as a measure of Disraeli's political stand. It helps to place the entire novel within the contemporary historical framework. The book begins on "the eve of the Derby of 1837" (p.1); there is a gap of two years before the beginning of Book IV, which is set "in the early part of the spring of 1839" (p.233), later defined as "May, 1839" (p.317). There is a much shorter gap before Book V, which begins with a discussion of the Birmingham riots which "occurred two months after the events that closed our last Book" (p.327). Book VI is positively identified as taking place "on the 5th of August, 1842" (p.400), and the final chapter of the whole novel begins, "It was the spring of last year" (p.484), that is, 1844. But aside from these specific dates, there are other obvious historical reference. Book I, Ch. VI, describes both how the news of the King's ill-health and death were received, and the accession of Queen Victoria. The political questions of 1839, the suspension of the Jamaican Constitution, the presentation of the Chartists' petition and the Bedchamber plot, are all dealt with at length. The strikes and risings of 1842 and the terrible depression which reached its crisis in that year are clearly recognisable, as are the improved conditions of 1844 at the book's conclusion: "The great measures of Sir Robert Peel, which produced three good harvests, have entirely revived trade at Mowbray" (p.488).

Unlike the possible identifications of some characters with contemporary figures, the recognition of these events could be relied upon in Disraeli's readers. This is the factual basis to

the book to which I referred earlier and is an equal part of the novel's structure with the fictional world's mysteries. Just as the air of uncertainty described earlier strengthens the credibility of the narrator who eventually answers all mysteries, so does his inside knowledge of actual politics and events. Both aspects of the book encourage the reader to accept him as an interpreter of both fictional and historical events. When Cazamian says that the arrests of Gerard and his brother-delegates contain "a good deal of accurate information... palpably parallel to the historical fate of Vincent and Lovett," he is going a long way to recognizing the mixture of fact and fiction that makes the novel so convincing.[35] "By placing his scenes in English society and weaving his tale around the political history of the day," writes M.F. Modder, "Disraeli embodies the national consciousness of his generation."[36]

But the complex relationship between fact and fiction can arise between narrator and character. Describing the people of Wodgate, Disraeli says, "they are animals; unconscious; their minds a blank; and their worst actions only the impulse of a gross or savage instinct" (p.189). Soon afterwards Gerard supports Disraeli in very similar words:

> "There are great bodies of the working classes of this country nearer the condition of brutes than they have been at any time since the Conquest. Indeed, I see nothing to distinguish them from brutes, except that their morals are inferior. Incest and infanticide are as common among them as among the lower animals." (p.198)

35. Cazamian, pp.196-7. My underlining.

36. M.F. Modder, "The Allen Patriot in Disraeli's Novels," London Quarterly and Holborn Review, Vol.159 (1934), p.364. Sheila M. Smith is also right to remind us that "the visionary quality of Sybil in the drab days of 1845, when ideals were precious things, is part of the authenticity of the novel." Smith, "Truth and Propaganda," p.90.

Later Disraeli describes what he sees as Peel's desertion of true Tory principles - "But we forget, Sir Robert Peel is not the leader of the tory party" (p.314) - and then attributes similar opinions to the Chartists: "They had long ceased to distinguish between the two parties who then and now contend for power. And they were right" (p.316). It would be difficult to describe the change of position between those last two sentences: from narrator to interpreter may perhaps suffice. However defined, the change illustrates Disraeli's ability to use his narrative position to strengthen his interpretative role. Perhaps it was such stratagems that Sheila M. Smith had in mind when she wrote, "Sybil is essentially a novel of ideas and an appeal to public opinion. Prominent among the different tones of voice in the novel is that of the politician arguing a cause."[37]

When discussing Coningsby I distinguished between historical narratives and the discussion of such thematic concepts as suffrage, and a similar distinction is valid here. Thackeray in his review in the Morning Chronicle of 13 May 1845 regrets the abundance of political discussion: "It was not from the latter... that the great success of 'Coningsby' arose," and Edmund Gosse repeats the complaint: "the purely narrative interest [is] considerably reduced in the pursuit of a scheme of political philosophy. This is of all Disraeli's novels the one which most resembles a pamphlet on a serious topic."[38] In truth, however, there is much less of it in this later novel.

37. Smith, Mr. Disraeli's Readers, p.8.

38. Thackeray, ed. Ray, p.78; Gosse, p.167.

In Book I, Ch. V (pp.35-6), there is a discussion of the effects of the Reform Act inserted into the story of Egremont's life prior to the novel's beginning, just as in Book I, Ch. III, (pp.15-29), a discussion of the history of the political parties is inserted into the previous history of the Egremont family. Nor can Disraeli resist the temptation when dealing with the Bedchamber Plot in Book IV, Ch. XIV, to insert a personal commentary on Peel's dealings with the situation and his inability to represent the "true" Tory party. But all the opinions in these sections are to be found at greater length in Coningsby. In Sybil, Disraeli's arguments are seldom presented through explicit discussion. Rather they exist in a texture which is made up of ignorance and mystery (present in language and structure), in recognizable contemporary references, and in a third element, documentary evidence.

It is this last - factual material - which constitutes the basis of Disraeli's picture of the condition of England. Part of his research was first hand. Monypenny and Buckle write that Disraeli's "visits to the North in the autumn of 1843 and 1844 had shown him the facts of life in the great industrial towns."[39] To this personal research Blake adds "the correspondence of Fergus O'Connor obtained for him by his friend Thomas Duncombe, a Radical M.P., and ... Part II of the Appendix to the Second Report of the Children's Employment Commission of 1842."[40] This Appendix, written by Richard Henry Horne, and Disraeli's use of it have been studied by Sheila M. Smith in "Willenhall and

39. Monypenny and Buckle, I.648.

40. Blake, Disraeli, p.212.

Wodgate: Disraeli's use of Blue Book Evidence," in which she convincingly argues that the Wodgate of Sybil is the Willenhall of the Report, an opinion supported by the Rev. Thomas Woodcock Fletcher, from 1848 Vicar of St. Stephens in Willenhall. He writes, in a letter to Disraeli, "The chapter on 'Wodgate' appears to me a true delineation of what Willenhall must have been at the time you penned its description."[41]

While generally accepting these sources, Martin Fido has more recently corrected certain misattributions by Cazamian and Smith. He pinpoints the source of the description of the town of Marney as Chadwick's Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population and shows that most of the rest of the information comes not from the Select Committee on the Payment of Wages (Truck) of 1842, nor the Handloom Weavers' Report of 1841, but from The Factory System Illustrated in a Series of Letters to Lord Ashley by William Dodd (1841), from contemporary Parliament speeches, and especially from The First Report from the Midland Mining Commissioners, South Staffs. - "the most influential Blue Book underlying Disraeli's fiction."[42] Patrick Brantlinger recognizes "the oath which Dandy Mick takes [as] that which Glasgow spinners were accused of using [in the Glasgow spinners strike of 1837]. Disraeli gives it to us verbatim, and the rest of the details of union ritual come from evidence taken by the

41. Sheila M. Smith, "Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence," Review of English Studies, Vol.XIII N.S. (1962), pp.368-84; Smith, Mr. Disraeli's Readers, p.55.

42. See Martin Fido, "The Treatment of Rural Distress in Disraeli's Sybil," Yearbook of English Studies, Vol.5 (1975), pp.153-63; Fido, "'From his own observation': Sources of Working Class Passages in Disraeli's Sybil," Modern Language Review, Vol.72 (1977), p.274.

Committee on Combinations."[43] Sheila Smith says of Disraeli's use of Willenhall:

> concerning his descriptions of Wodgate's material conditions; of the appearance, and nature of its inhabitants; and of the hard treatment received by its apprentices, Disraeli's claim, in the Advertisement to the first edition of Sybil, that he had not exaggerated but had relied on "the authentic evidence which had been received by Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Committees" is just.[44]

But there are some exaggerations, such as the frequency of the sale of apprentices, or the age of their starting work. Other facts have been omitted; some, concerning sanitation or privacy, perhaps to spare the reader's susceptibilities.

This documentary material, overtly recognized in the Advertisement, lies exactly between the mysterious fictional world and the recognizable historical world, because while it is true, it is not believed. With hindsight we can now recognize the truth of Disraeli's desciptions of social conditions, but we should not underestimate the strength of contemporary disbelief. It can perhaps be best illustrated by the Westminster Review in 1845. In the use of Willenhall as a model, it is alleged, Disraeli chose one of the worst possible examples of an industrial slum, and he was taken to task for it: "he has selected a few of the coarsest and most questionable pictures contained in the reports referred to, relating to peculiar and exceptional cases."[45] The reviewer does not, however, point out that Disraeli makes it clear that Wodgate is also the most extreme example in his

43. Patrick Brantlinger, "The Case Against Trade Unions in Early Victorian Fiction," Victorian Studies, Vol.XIII (1969), p.39.

44. Smith, "Willenhall and Wodgate," pp.372-3.

45. W.R. Greg, Westminster Review, Vol.XLIV (1845), p.143.

fictional England. Furthermore Sybil is

> obviously not the result of any genuine regard for the poor and the afflicted.... We search in vain for evidence of an unaffected sympathy for the miseries of the mass of the people.... The result is a picture singularly unreal and untrue, bearing upon every feature of it proof and proclamation, that it is not drawn from life, but concocted from second-hand sources, and out of materials which the painter was incompetent to appreciate or mould.[46]

Disraeli's use of the factual detail he obtained from documentary sources has been continuously open to comment - often contradictory. From 1878 - "For once he had conquered his repugnance to details" (Fortnightly Review) - to 1954 and the comment that Disraeli "had a most remarkable knowledge - a knowledge incomparably superior to that of Dickens - of how the poor did in fact live in England" he has had his supporters.[47] Yet his ability to make creative use of the documentary nature of parts of the book has had its detractors: "where the detail is present... [it] has a theoretical air about it, giving the impression of intelligent reporting rather than sympathetic description," or "Disraeli's accounts of the working classes, though based on the latest information from the government blue books, do not ring true. They are well documented, but they are not alive."[48] Indeed, he has even been criticized for not being extreme enough:

> He talks of the most depraved and brutal of our populace - the other nation, indeed - but he is speaking of them and their condition to patrons of fashionable circulating libraries; so like the

46. Ibid., pp.141-3.

47. Minto, p.355; Hollis, p.115.

48. Arthur Pollard, "The Novels of Mrs. Gaskell," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Vol. XLIII (1961), p.411; Aydelotte, p.47.

> preachers in Westend chapels, he no sooner shocks the feelings of those he addresses by the utterance of a startling and solemn truth, than he soothes their alarm by the smooth common-places of the drawing room.[49]

Sheila M. Smith reaches a fair compromise on the question of how successfully Disraeli manages to integrate the details about social conditions:

> The main temptation is to transfer the facts straight from their source to the novel without transmuting them into the total fabric of the novel, to make the facts an end in themselves without regarding their effect on the novel as a whole....Disraeli in Sybil sometimes presents his reader with undigested facts from the Blue Books but... more often he uses his facts purposefully in Sybil often as vehicles for ideas which are of great importance in the novel.[50]

What she does not say is that it is the novel's dependence on a balance between acknowledged facts, "mysteries" and unacknowledged facts that allows Disraeli to incorporate such documentary material.

Blake's remark that Disraeli deals "with real problems, if not always with real people" is justified and since it is Disraeli's characters, not his facts, which are idealized, Blake is not so far from Robert Hamilton's comment that "the indictment in Sybil is more convincing than the ideal."[51] Kathleen Tillotson is dealing with the same contrast when she writes, "The use, by Disraeli... of the interclass marriage or love-affair, is perhaps the most appropriate compromise between romance and sociology."[52] It is important to realize that a compromise has

49. Jeaffreson, p.253.

50. Smith, "Truth and Propaganda," pp.77-8.

51. Blake, Disraeli, p.220; Robert Hamilton, "Disraeli and the Two Nations," Quarterly Review, Vol.288 (1950), p.111.

52. Tillotson, p.122.

been achieved. Much of the "convincing" documentary material has entered the novel through the hero and heroine, those "ideal" figures of romance. Though of the wealthy aristocracy they are not ignorant of the conditions of the other nation, but have lived among them. Sybil is a novel consisting of division and contrasts, whose ultimate progression is towards unification, specifically in the marriage of Sybil and Egremont, but more generally (and more optimistically) throughout England.

In Coningsby we have seen the importance of places and they are equally important here. Essentially they tell their own story. Walter Sichel says of Disraeli's description of Marney Abbey that "its inherent qualities of romance [constrain] us to sympathise with the temper in which the artist sympathises with his scene."[53] The market town of Marney

> consisted of a variety of narrow and crowded lanes formed by cottages built of rubble, or unhewn stones without cement, and, from age or badness of the material, looking as if they could scarcely hold together. The gaping chinks admitted every blast; the leaning chimneys had lost half their original height; the rotten rafters were evidently misplaced; while in many instances the thatch, yawning in some parts to admit the wind and wet, and in all utterly unfit for its original purpose of giving protection from the weather, looked more like the top of a dunghill than a cottage. (p.60)

The manufacturing town of Mowbray consists of "close courts and pestilential cul-de-sacs... dank and dismal dwellings" (p.100). Conditions are even worse when Wodgate is described:

53. Walter Sichel, "Lord Beaconsfield as a Landscape Painter," Time, Vol. 7 N.S. (1888), p.540.

> There were no public buildings of any sort.... At every fourth or fifth house, alleys seldom above a yard wide, and streaming with filth, opened out of the street. These were crowded with dwellings of various size, while from the principal court often branches out a number of smaller alleys, or rather narrow passages, than which nothing can be conceived more close and squalid and obscure. Here, during the days of business, the sound of the hammer and the file never ceased, amid gutters of abomination, and piles of foulness, and stagnant pools of filth; reservoirs of leprosy and plague, whose exhalations were sufficient to taint the atmosphere of the whole kingdom, and fill the country with fever and pestilence. (pp.189-90)

Finally London is described:

> Now dark streets of frippery and old stores, now market-places of entrails and carrion, with gutters running gore, sometimes the way was enveloped in the yeasty fumes of a colossal brewery, and sometimes they plunged into a labyrinth of lanes teeming with life, and where the dog-stealer and the pick-pocket, the burglar and the assassin, found a sympathetic multitude of all ages; comrades for every enterprise, and a market for every booty. (p.362)

Monypenny and Buckle consider that this is Disraeli trying to cover both the urban and the rural poor:

> If the bad harvests which began in 1837 brought deeper misery to the agricultural poor, the bad trade by which they were accompanied made the condition of the industrial workers if possible, even worse. The descriptions in Sybil of the rural town of Marney help us to realise the sufferings of the one, the pictures of life in Mowbray and the mining district near it the sufferings of the other. [54]

Martin Fido, however, has pointed out that "Disraeli never explores the subject" of rural distress, nor has he "analysed and confronted the nature of agricultural poverty" in as thorough a manner as he has the industrial situation.[55] I do not think

54. Monypenny and Buckle, I.479.

55. Fido, "The Treatment of Rural Distress,"pp.154, 157.

that one need accept his argument that this was because the recognition of rural distress might weaken Young England propaganda. Any book is limited in the number of battles it can fight at one time.

Constantly contrasted with poverty and misery is the affluence and ease of the upper classes. Egremont, in his two roles, as Lord Marney's brother and Mr. Franklin, has access to both societies, but even when he cannot articulate the contrasts for us, Disraeli, using comparable situations, or successive chapters, makes clear comparisons in more specific ways; for example in the way the two nations take their pleasures. The novel begins with London gentlemen at their club making book on the Derby and follows them to Epsom. The first time we meet the workers en masse they too are at their club. Book II, Ch. X, from which the above description of Mowbray is taken, describes the enjoyments of the mill-workers at the music hall, The Temple of the Muses, and their meal of sausages and mash, and continues with the narrative of Devilsdust's pathetic history. Immediately afterwards, in Book II, Ch. XI, there is a description of a dinner party at Mowbray Castle, where "the dinner was stately, as becomes the high nobility. There were many guests, yet the table seemed only a gorgeous spot in the capacious chamber. The side tables were laden with silver vases and golden shields arranged on shelves of crimson velvet" (p.117), and St. Lys' family history is described. If one is not capable of recognizing how far apart these two worlds are, a topic of conversation at the dinner table illustrates one of the few ways in which the two nations might

meet - on a train. Lady Vanilla

> "came up with Lady Laura, and two of the most gentlemanlike men sitting opposite her; never met, she says, two more intelligent men. She begged one of them at Wolverhampton to change seats with her, and he was most politely willing to comply with her wishes, only it was necessary that his companion should move at the same time, for they were chained together! Two gentlemen, sent to town for picking a pocket at Shrewsbury races." "A countess and a felon! So much for public conveyances." (pp.118-9)

Similarly in Book IV, Chs. III and IV show contrasting pictures. In the former a vote in the House is described and then discussed by Ladies St. Julians and Deloraine. In the latter Gerard addresses a torch-light meeting of Chartists and a commentary is provided for it by the discussions of Devilsdust and Dandy Mick.

Disraeli can and does make even more overt comparisons. After describing Sybil's nightmare journey through London, he beings his next chapter with a reminder: "On the same night that Sybil was encountering so many dangers, the saloons of Deloraine House blazed with a thousand lights to welcome the world of power and fashion to a festival of almost unprecedented magnificence" (p.366). The affair is watched by a group of the London homeless which "assembled in the same fashionable quarter, beneath a canopy not less bright and reclining on a couch scarcely less luxurious, for they were lit by the stars and reposed upon the grass" (p.367).[56]

56. In Lothair there is a comparable passage: "As the Cardinal was regaining his carriage... there was, about the entrance of the house, the usual gathering under such circumstances; some zealous linkboys marvellously familiar with London life, and some midnight loungers, who thus take their humble share of the social excitement, and their happy chance of becoming acquainted with some of the notables of the wondrous world of which they form the base. This little gathering, ranged at the instant into stricter order by the police to facilitate the passage of his Eminence, prevented the progress for a passenger, who exclaimed in an audible ... voice... "A bas les Prêtes!'" (p.35). While the passage from Sybil with its emphasis on the poverty

Some of the characters even contrast themselves with their betters. The mill girl Harriet asks, "'Why are we not to interfere with politics as much as the swell ladies in London?'" (p.422), thus formally recognizing the contrast between herself and Julia in Mowbray and their upper-class counterparts, Lady St. Julians and Lady Deloraine in London.[57] When all else fails Disraeli articulates the contrast himself. After describing the methods of wage-giving at Mr. Trafford's model factory he adds, "and those of our readers who may have read or can recall the sketches, neither coloured nor exaggerated, which we have given in the early part of this volume of the very different manner in which the working classes may receive the remuneration for their toil, will probably agree" (p.220) how much better Trafford's system is.

Sheila M. Smith is right to remind us that the idea of the two nations was prevalent at the time, that in Sybil,"Disraeli... was transforming and at the same time popularising an idea which had general currency,"[58] but we are more concerned here with how he was dealing with it. "The object from the first is to emphasize

---

of the participants (only owning "stars" and "grass") continues into a discussion of unemployment and a brawl, that in Lothair shows no such social concerns. There the participants enjoy the prospect of the life their betters lead and obey the police. It is a foreigner who threatens the social fabric by wishing priests ill. The different concerns of the two novels are revealed.

57. Françoise Basch finds Disraeli's non-condemnatory inclusion of such outspokenness surprising, indeed almost unique; but she has allowed her interest in contemporary attitudes towards working women to blind her to the structural demands of the fiction which are the cause of their presence. See François Basch, Relative Creatures: Victorian Women in Society and the Novel 1837-67, trans. A. Rudolf (London, 1974), pp.187-8.

58. Smith, Mr. Disraeli's Readers, p.13.

the contrast between the two nations "[59] - Monypenny and Buckle's truism was recognized in a parody of 1879:

> For there opposed each other but two elements in this society at once strange and simple. Around the throne of the Great Peter, and in the marble city which is his monument, the gay circles of the Aristocracy frittered away a frivolous existence amid the blaze of diamonds.... So lived the lords of those vast plains, whose immensity made aptly significant the proud title of "All the Russians." And the tiller of those plains, what of him? Surrounded by the sad and sombre Steppe, that breathed its melancholy over him from the cradle, broken by toil and of untutored mind, his life was suffering without interval of enjoyment, degradation without hope of change.[60]

A greater wit than the above shows a more sophisticated recognition of the type of contrast that Disraeli is attempting. In his review of Sybil, Thackeray writes:

> The novel in alternate chapters takes us from one to the other nation - from the orgies of the Crockford dandies to the amusements of the poor workmen of the mills - from the cabals of parliamentary parties, whose rogueries are admirably satirized, to the Chartists and their conspiracies, and their impractical selfishness, of which he is an equally bitter castigator.[61]

Disraeli can also build up a more complex web of reaction than "the contrasts between the two nations" would suggest. One

59. Monypenny and Buckle, I.651.

60. "Nihilism in Russia (In imitation of Disraeli's Sybil)," by Broughshane. This imitation won the first prize in a parody competition in The World, 17 September, 1879; quoted from Walter Hamilton, ed., Parodies of the Works of English and American Authors (London, 1889), VI.239.

61. Thackeray, ed. Ray, p.81. Thackeray also noticed not only the symmetrical pattern of the contrasts, but also Disraeli's equal-handed attacks. We have already seen that Coningsby contained criticism of Tories and Whigs; Tancred will even belittle Coningsby and his friends. Perhaps one should not be too surprised that, with his characteristic ability to see both sides, Disraeli should make the hero of Endymion a Whig.

begins in Book III, Ch. II, which recounts the journey home of Lord Marney and Egremont. The former "was kept at the station, which aggravated his spleen" (p.169). Their subsequent meal together is disastrous: "The dinner was silent and sombre; happily it was also short. Lord Marney tasted several dishes, ate of none; found fault with his own claret" (p.170). The chapter ends with an argument between them on money matters, and Egremont leaves his brother's house. The succeeding chapter is set among the working classes, and gives a cruel twist to the identical concerns of travel, food and money. The workers' wives are collecting at Mr. Diggs' tommy-shop to purchase their provisions. They describe their journeys - "'It's three miles for me here, and the same back'" (p.179) - and constantly discuss what they will eat - "'meat's my grievance: all the best bits go to the butties, and the pieces with bones in are chopped off for the colliers' wives'" (p.180). There is an argument about money - "'but how are we to pay the money we owe... with such a tommy-book as this?'" (p.181).

There is only one different subject included in Ch. III; after the women enter the tommy-shop, the cruel Master Joseph puts out a baby's eye with his yard measure, a boy faints in the crush and is thought to be dead. It is this last episode which is specifically recalled to the reader's attention by Disraeli later in the novel, in a scene which extends the meaning of the earlier contrast. "Does the reader remember Diggs' tommy shop? And Master Joseph?" (pp.436-7). This reminder precedes the description of what happens in the tommy-shop during the riots

when "Master Joseph fired, wounded a woman and killed a child" (p.440). The reminder confirms the earlier description of Joseph's villany which in turn helps to justify the Hellcats' response. They burn down the tommy-shop with Joseph in it. The basis of the reader's inability to condemn the mob comes in the first instance from the immediate display of Joseph's wickedness, and from the reminder of his earlier cruelty; but ultimately it arises from the much earlier comparison of the workers' tribulations with the easy lives of the aristocracy in Book III, Chs. II and III.

Similarly, when St. Lys predicts the catastophe of the novel, it is in a context which puts most of the blame on the uncaring landlords: "'You have declared war to the cottage, then,' said Mr. St. Lys, smiling. 'It is not at the first sound so startling a cry as war to the castle.' 'But you think it may lead to it?' said Lord Mowbray" (p.127).

As Thackeray realized, Disraeli is fairly even-handed in his criticisms. The opening chapters clearly show the degeneracy of the ruling classes. It is there in Alfred Mountchesney,

> a youth of tender years... whose fair visage was as downy and as blooming as the peach from which, with a languid air, he withdrew his lips.... "I feel so cursed blasé!... Nothing can do me good.... I should be quite content if anything could do me harm.... I rather like bad wine... one gets so bored with good wine." (pp.2-3)

Even our hero Egremont "had been brought up in the enjoyment of every comfort and every luxury that refinement could devise and

wealth furnish. He was a favourite child. His parents emulated each other in pampering and indulging him" (p.33). (The note of criticism comes in the words pampering and indulging.) Later he becomes a critic of his peers and attacks such conversations as Mountchesney's for being

> "deficient in warmth, and depth, and breadth... always discussing persons instead of principles, and cloaking its want of thought in mimetic dogmas, and its want of feeling is superficial raillery.... [I]t has neither imagination, nor fancy, nor sentiment, nor feeling, nor knowledge... but...[is] inferior in refinement and phraseology; in short, trivial, uninteresting, stupid, really vulgar." (p.153)

The very epigraph is critical of the present aristocracy; it is a quotation from Bishop Latimer: "The Commonalty murmured, and said, 'There never were so many Gentlemen, and so little Gentleness!" Even their Norman ancestry, on which so many of them congratulate themselves ("'Royal and Norman blood like ours... is not to be thrown over in that way,'" (p.303)), is shown to be false, as Baptist Hatton's work of inventing Norman antecedents reveals.

What are we to make, then, of the fact that our heroine is discovered to be the heir to the Mowbray title and estates? We cannot ignore it as Brandes seems to wish. He sees "a symbolic union between... the Tories and the people[in] the marriage of Charles Egremont to Sybil Gerard."[62] Speare would seem to support this point of view and Cazamian clearly does, when he says of Egremont - "He chooses a wife from among the enemies of his hereditary caste." His explanation of Sybil's actual position is that it is done "to soften the extravagant boldness of his marriage."[63]

62. Brandes, p.284.

63. Speare, p.74; Cazamian, pp. 193, 194.

Thackeray recognizes that there is something wrong with an interpretation which insists on seeing Sybil as a representative of the people, but he lays the error at Disraeli's door. Sybil turns "out to be one of the old, old nobility of all, a baroness of forty thousand pounds a year, she marries Egremont; and these two, doubtless, typify the union of the people and the nobles."[64] This is also the view of John Lucas: he calls it "a piece of creaking plot mechanism," complains that we are not "made aware of the massing of social pressures - mutual distrust, prejudice and so on - that will do their damnedest to prevent the marriage," and criticizes Disraeli for illogicality when, with the revelation of Sybil's aristocratic heritage, "the whole idea of the rich and the poor being reunited goes out of the window."[65]

The reunion of rich and poor is, of course, not the solution which Disraeli is offering; indeed he is offering an analysis, not a solution. Neither is Sybil the religious symbol which Daniel Schwarz makes her, though the notion does enable him to recognize the importance of the marriage: "By dramatizing how Charles discovers Sybil's spiritual potential and how Sybil discovers Charles's political insight, Disraeli suggests that their possible union is significant and desirable in far more than personal terms."[66]

What is actually meant by their union is clearly stated in the book itself. Egremont tells Sybil, "'The new generation of the

64. Thackeray, ed. Ray, p.82.

65. John Lucas, "Mrs. Gaskell and Brotherhood," in D. Howard, J. Lucas, J. Goode, Tradition and Tolerance in Nineteenth Century Fiction (London, 1966), p.157.

66. Schwarz, p.21.

aristocary of England are not tyrants, not oppressors.... They are the natural leaders of the People'" (pp.319-20). If Egremont is to be proved right in this, and if Sybil's father Walter Gerard, is to be justified in his undoubted role as leader of the people, then he, and in turn she, must be seen to be of the nobility, as, of course, they are. Cazamian comes nearer to the truth when he writes, "In Coningsby the [mistaken] alternatives to the new Toryism were utilitarian radicalism and Peelite conservatism. Now, in Sybil the changed social basis leads to a different set of erroneous doctrines. Chartism and socialism are revolutionary answers to the problems which Young England hopes to resolve peacefully."[67] In as much as Young England is represented by Egremont, he does not make the error of espousing Chartism when he marries Sybil; rather they both embody the peaceful alternative of responsible aristocratic leadership, Egremont having learnt to be responsible and Sybil to be aristocratic.[68]

In this analysis of Sybil I have tried to stress the unity

67. Cazamian, p.196.

68. Very often the attitudes which Disraeli suggests are the prerequisites to solving England's problems seem to have no place in the modern world: on an occasion when they were not entirely wrong, the least one can do is mention it: "There was a feeling expressed in Disraeli's Coningsby and Sybil that the new forces of organized labour were waiting for leadership from the educated and preferably from the aristocratic classes. The comparative social peacefulness and increasing prosperity of the years from 1850 to 1890, coupled with the thoroughly ducal composition of the Cabinets of Disraeli and Gladstone as late as the seventies and eighties showed that this was not an illusion." A.O.J. Cockshut, "Victorian Thought," in Arthur Pollard, ed., The Victorians (London, 1969), p.28.

that Disraeli has achieved: a unity coming from the fact that Disraeli's basic concepts of ignorance and knowledge are not only the matter of the novel, but are reflected in its basic structure and language. This is a unity which does survive the disjointed time scheme, despite Speare's second-hand criticism, "It has been declared that this novel is a series of tableaux rather than a connected story, lacking therefore any organic unity."[69] There is one more area in which an attempt to teaze out the various threads may in fact reveal how closely they are interwoven, and that is the use of religion in the book. Each of the four major venues of the novel is defined by its religious building, or lack of it, in a manner reminiscent of the use of houses in Coningsby. Marney, of course, has its Abbey where the significant meeting between Egremont and the Gerards takes place, the major definition of the two nations is made, and a romantic Young England picture of the past is drawn. It was from the dissolution of monasteries in general and this one in particular that the fortunes of the Marney family grew; they are indeed called "the lay Abbot[s] of Marney" (p.12), and the present Lord Marney is their true heir: "In the catalogue of his aversions, we ought to give the preference to his anti-ecclesiastical prejudice; this amounted even to acrimony.... 'No priestcraft at Marney,' said this gentle proprietor of abbey lands" (p.54).

Mowbray, on the other hand, has its great Church, also a result of monastic building, and its influence is still felt:

69. Speare, p.76.

> When manufactures were introduced into this district ... to Mowbray... was accorded the preference, "because it possessed such a beautiful church." The lingering genius of the monks of Mowbray hovered round the spot which they had adorned... and thus they had indirectly become the authors of its present greatness and prosperity. (p.124)

But despite the great industrial population, "the congregation of Mowbray was approaching zero" (p.125). Just as Mowbray shares a history with Marney, but adds a further comment on contemporary religious observance, so Wodgate shares an equal dearth of Christian observance, and adds the element of pagan worship:

> "Wodgate, or Wogate... was a district that in old days had been consecrated to Woden, and which appeared destined through successive ages to retain its heathen character.... It was a district recognized by no parish.... No church there has yet raised its spire... as if the jealous spirit of Woden still haunted his ancient temple." (pp.186-7)

If this "jealous spirit" reminds one of "the lingering genius of the monks of Mowbray," then the leader of the community, the "Bishop of Wodgate" (p.205), reminds one of the "lay Abbot of Marney." "'It has always been so that Wodgate has been governed by a bishop; because, as we have no church, we will have as good.'" The Bishop performs religious functions: "'he married me to this here young lady... he sprinkled some salt over a gridiron, read "Our Father" backwards, and wrote our name in a book: and we were spliced'" (p.192).

Finally we come to London. Significantly Egremont and Sybil meet again in Westminster Abbey. At their second meeting Disraeli has to describe the history of Westminster Abbey, but now we are in a part of the novel (Book IV) which deals with Sybil's education, and since she has to understand Disraeli's

notions of history and of where power lies, it is those aspects of the building that are stressed:

> Around its consecrated precinct some of the boldest and some of the worst deeds have been achieved or perpetrated.... [H]ere the great estate of the church, which, whatever its articles of faith, belonged and still belongs to the people, was seized at various times, under various pretences, by an assembly that continually changed the religion of their country and their own by a parliamentary majority, but which never refunded the booty. (p.265)

If Marney Abbey is in ruins and Mowbray Church almost empty, then the modern use of Westminster Abbey is also condemned. Egremont is horrifed by

> the boards and the spikes with which he seemed to be environed, as if the Abbey were in a state of siege; iron gates shutting him out from the solemn nave and the shadowy aisles; scarcely a glimpse to be caught of a single window; while on a dirty form, some noisy vergers sat like ticket-porters or babbled like tapsters at their ease, the visions of abbatial perfection, in which he had early and often indulged among the ruins of Marney, rose on his outraged sense. (pp.266-7)

Throughout the novel the Christian church is condemned for its ignorance and abandonment of the people: the "Holy Church at Marney had forgotten her sacred mission" (p.63). The vicar of Marney "deemed he did his duty if he preached each week two sermons, and enforced humility on his congregation, and gratitude for the blessings of this life" (p.63). Prior to St. Lys' advent, "for a long season the vicars of Mowbray had been little conscious of their mission" (p.125). Again the similarity of the language and the nature of the comparison enable Disraeli to build up a connected picture. Within the picture the Marneys, as destroyers of the monasteries, are condemned, and the Gerards, as upholders

of the Old Faith and relatives of the last Abbot of Marney, who did not surrender "that holy trust" but "was tortured and hanged" (p.96), have their roots in the good side of English history. If we add to this the picture of the leader of Wodgate being its Bishop, or Sybil being rescued from her London nightmare by a fellow Catholic, we can see that there is a constant personal implication of the effect of religion. Further, much of it has been established through the family histories whose importance we noted earlier, and several of the international comparisons have a religious aspect. All these threads weave together to form a united view of contemporary England, in which Disraeli's historical perspective has been extended by the religious one.

There is one area of the novel where religious fervor can be found, however, and its first instance comes at the Torch-light meeting, held at the Druid's Altar, where "the ground about was strewn with stony fragments... ruins of some ancient temple, or relics of some ancient world" (p.249). It is, of course, a Chartist meeting, but the imagery that surrounds it is religious. Disraeli did not have to invent such phrases as "the sacred rights of labour" (p.249), but he was able to weave them into his picture; when the meeting is over the workers are enjoined to "depart in peace " (p.250). The chapter (Book IV, Ch.IV) does not however end there, but continues to Dandy Mick's initiation into a Trades Union, where again religious imagery is used. While he is kneeling, waiting for the ceremony to begin, he hears the words of a "hymn" (p.253), which is followed by what seems like a series of reponses, until he hears a voice:

> "there is, I am informed, a stranger present, who prays to be admitted into our fraternity. Are all robed in the mystic robe? Are all masked in the secret mask?... Then let us pray!" And thereupon, after a movement which intimated that all present were kneeling, the presiding voice offered up an extemporary prayer.... This was succeeded by the Hymn of Labour. (p.254)

The seven presiding unionists are dressed in "surplices" and in front of them is "the sacred volume" (p.255) which Mick has to kiss after his initiation. Again, when Gerard has been released on bail, "Every artisan felt as a Moslem summoned to the sacred standard. All went forth... to hail the return of the patriot and the martyr" (p.392), and this is the only occasion on which Mowbray Church is full. Bishop Hatton's adoption of Chartist principles, which tranforms him into the Liberator is described thus: "he embraced it fervently, and he determined to march into the country at the head of the population of Wodgate, and establish the faith. Since the conversion of Constantine, a more important adoption had never occurred" (p.433). His advance is called "the most striking popular movement since the Pilgrimage of Grace" (p.434).

To compare Disraeli's version of these events with the documentary evidence confirms the opinion that he is using them for imaginative, fictional purposes. To begin with, Disraeli has over-emphasized the absence of religion in Wodgate. Sheila M. Smith writes: "Disraeli summarily removes the churches and chapels from Woodgate."[70] Horne, though he gave evidence of the lack of any religious belief or understanding among the apprentices

70. Smith, "Willenhall and Wodgate," p.373.

there, reckoned that there were four Sunday schools. Later she says, "The details of the pagan marriage ceremony in which Sue and Tummas take part are probably Disraeli's imagining" though they are "not ludicrously improbable."[71] She sees the interest in religion in the novel as part of what Disraeli wants to reveal about England: "The nightmare quality of [Wodgate] is fitting in the novel, which is partly concerned with revealing pagan savagery in contemporary England, and is of a piece with Sybil's nightmare journey in the East End in search of her father."[72] In other words, the church is not doing its job; its place is being taken either by a return to paganism or by the religious fervour of Chartism. But Smith does not take the next step of seeing religion as part of the pattern which connects places, names, English history and family histories into the book's overall structure. Neither does John Lucas. By first defining (to his own satisfaction at least) Disraeli's aims, he is then content to find them unfulfilled:

> There is, in the novel, the repeated assertion of the need for church city missions, in order to carry Christianity into a context of industrialism. Now as a statement of one aspect of the Tractarian movement - to which the Young Englanders owed a good deal - there is nothing much to say for or against the assertion, except that Disraeli clearly wants it to carry part of the novel's burden; national institutions must serve more than class interests if they are to help in uniting the nation. But there is never a chance of this assertion actively to help shape the novel; in no sense can you regard is as modifying it.[73]

The "assertion" exists more in Lucas' criticism than in Sybil:

71. Ibid., p.379.

72. Ibid., pp.382-3.

73. Lucas, pp.155-6.

the actual use of religion is part of a complex pattern of imagery, reinforcing the background from which the argument comes, not the argument itself.

In Contarini Fleming Disraeli wrote, "I have observed that, after writing a book, my mind always makes a great spring" (p.267), and it is clear that in Sybil he has come far from Coningsby. Although he still uses the phrase "trace or analyse" (p.486) to describe his literary procedure, by now he is writing a much more complex novel, much more unified, where the political argument is more promoted through the book's totality than by overt arguments. It is significant that in Sybil, Egremont's election to Parliament is not described at all, whereas his education in the condition of the people is. Perhaps Tancred in its concern with the need for a mystical basis to life can be seen as "a great spring" forward from the religious concerns of Sybil.

CHAPTER SIX: TANCRED

The concluding part of Disraeli's trilogy is Tancred: or the New Crusade, published in 1847. Disraeli makes it clear in the General Preface to the 1870 Collected Edition of his novels that it was to be considered along with Coningsby and Sybil: "The derivation and character of political parties; the condition of the people which had been the consequence of them; the duties of the Church as a main remedial agency in our present state; were the principal topics which I intended to treat." After explaining that Coningsby and Sybil dealt with the first two topics, Disraeli continues, "In recognizing the Church as a powerful agent in the previous development of England... it seemed to me that the time had arrived when it became my duty to... consider the position of the descendants of that race who had been the founders of Christianity.... [I]n TANCRED OR THE NEW CRUSADE, the third portion of the trilogy, I completed their development."

When "we come on from Sybil to Tancred," writes Hollis, "Disraeli goes one stage further and argues that these problems cannot indeed be solved on the merely political level, but nor can they be solved on the merely social level. The issues are

in the last analysis religious issues."[1] In other words, Disraeli has now come to look directly at the religious basis for the regeneration of England which has been proposed in the previous novels. As Tancred himself says,"'I do not believe that anything great is ever affected by management.... [W]e must recur to the high primeval practice, and address nations now as the heroes, and prophets, and legislators of antiquity. If you wish to free your country... you must act like Moses'" (p.258).

What immediately strikes the reader as connecting Tancred with the rest of trilogy is the number of characters from Coningsby and Sybil who recur, or are referred to. As early as p.4 the chef Leander remarks, "'It is only this morning that I have returned from Mr. Coningsby's at Hellingsley,'" and there are references to "The great ladies... the Lady St. Julians and the Marchionesses of Deloraine" (p.17) from Sybil, "the late Lord Monmouth" (p.57) from Coningsby, and even Contarini Fleming (p.178). Other characters, however, appear in their own right, and the reader is often reminded that this is not his first meeting, as in the case of "our friend, Mrs. Guy Flouncey " (p.83), whose rise to social prominence is charted, and of Edith Coningsby - "Hitherto we have known Edith only in her girlhood" (p.99). Even Lady Bardolf's present situation is related through her previous history, known to readers of Sybil: she "had given up the old family mansion of the Firebraces in Hanover Square, at the same time that she had resigned their old title" (p.129).

1. Hollis, p.107.

Similarly the events of the intervening years between their first and present appearances are given in the cases of the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine, Lady Joan Mountchesney and Lady Maud Fitz-Warene, Lord Henry Sydney, and Villebecque (pp.127, 134, 165).

Perhaps the most interesting example occurs in Book II, Chs. XIII and XIV, at the dinner party that Sidonia gives for Tancred. There Tancred meets, and we re-meet, Lord Henry Sydney, Lord and Lady Marney, and Mr. and Mrs. Coningsby. It is, perhaps, the culmination of the personal connections within the trilogy.[2] Yet the people there are somewhat disppointing; they seem rather shallow and trivial. It would be wrong to dismiss this as a failure of Disraeli's art, since the effect of their diminished appearance is to heighten our appreciation of the importance of Tancred's quest. We cannot disregard the poor showing here of our previous heroes and heroines. Effectively their inclusion and the subsequent disappointment to which it gives rise support the argument of the book. The poverty of orthodox religion, the frivolity of London society and the shallowness of Lady Constance Rawleigh and Lady Bertie and Bellairs also add to the anticipation of what spiritual wisdom the East will reveal in the second half of the book.

It is not by chance that the opening section of Tancred, which is set in England, fails to mention the hardships that were the subject of Sybil. Tancred's concern with his soul

2. There are recurring figures in other Disraeli novels (e.g. Lord St. Jerome, a minor character in The Young Duke, takes a more important role in Lothair, and Lothair and other characters from that novel reappear in minor roles in Falconet), but never such important characters, nor given such an important role in their second appearance as here.

can be received more sympathetically if the reader is not constantly made aware of social wrongs crying out to be righted. Disraeli has made sure that the book does not contain too immediate an answer to Tancred's question, "'What ought I to DO?'" (p.55). The whole of Book I consists of scenes of social unity at Tancred's coming-of-age, engrossing the chefs, the peasantry, town council, county and aristocracy. Once Tancred has travelled to the East and his quest for spiritual enlightenment is firmly established, however, Disraeli can, as it were in retrospect, declare England and Europe to be miserable: "Enlightened Europe is not happy. Its existence is a fever, which it calls progress" (p.224). He can then dilate on "the growing melancholy of enlightened Europe, veiled, as it may be, with sometimes a conceited bustle, sometimes a desperate shipwreck gaiety" (p.270), where "amid its false excitements, its bustling invention, and its endless toil, a profound melancholy broods over its spirit and gnaws at its heart" (pp.310-11). In this second section, set in Palestine, the criticism which establishes the need for reform, found in both Sybil and Coningsby, can be recreated.

There are other similarities between the novels of the trilogy. Monypenny and Buckle comment perceptively that Tancred "is, in fact, a type of religious discontent, as Coningsby was of political,"[3] and a comparison of Tancred, Book II, Ch. I, where the hero refuses the offer of a Parliamentary seat from his father until he has resolved his moral searching, with

3. Monypenny and Buckle, I.851.

Coningsby, Book VIII, Ch. III, where Coningsby turns down the offer of a Parliamentary seat made by his grandfather, because he cannot support the unreconstituted Tory Party, makes this quite clear.

Although the themes of Tancred are not those of Coningsby and Sybil, a contemporary reviewer was able to describe it as a development from the earlier books:

> Hints which there gleamed only now and then, are here worked up into the substance of the book; theories which there occupied a few casual pages, here become the groundwork for the plot. The importance of Race on the affairs of mankind... the superiority of the Hebrew race to all others .... These two points are the key-notes of Tancred.[4]

Indeed R.A. Levine has argued that "It is in this novel [Tancred] that we are given the theoretical foundation of religious thought upon which men like Eustace Lyle in Coningsby and Aubrey St. Lys in Sybil can erect their practical applications."[5] A comparison of St. Lys' remarks - "'The prophets were not Romans; the apostles were not Romans; she who was blessed above all women, I never heard she was a Roman maiden'" (p.131) - with the opinions of Eva makes such developments clear. In the earlier books, St. Lys and Lyle are minor characters, but Eva and her opinions are central to Tancred: e.g., "'The English bishop here has given me the book [The New Testament]. It is a good one, written, I observe, entirely by Jews'" (p.189); or of the Virgin Mary, "'Pray are you of those Franks who worship a Jewess; or of those others who revile her, break her images, and blaspheme

4. The Christian Remembrancer, Vol.XIII (April 1847), p.523.

5. R.A. Levine, "Disraeli's Tancred' and 'The Great Asian Mystery,'" Nineteenth Century Fiction, Vol.22 (1967), p.81.

her pictures?'" (p.188). St. Lys was also the earlier mouthpiece of much of the criticism of the Church of England, which becomes so much stronger in Tancred.

Perhaps two further arguments could be suggested to confirm Tancred as a logical extension of Coningsby and Sybil. The first concerns family relationships. In Coningsby, the hero's relationship and ultimate break with his grandfather was seen to provide a parallel to the growth of the "new" Conservative party. In Sybil the family history of all the central characters was described to provide a social interpretation of the historical background to the conflict. Now Disraeli's interest has turned firmly to religion and race, and it is in these terms that family histories are seen. Although the description of the antecedents of the Bellamonts in Book I, Ch. II, begins like any one from Sybil, it continues to describe Tancred's parents thus:

> He had passed his life so much among women and clergymen, that he had never emancipated himself from the old law that enjoined him to honour a parent.... She... was his cousin... [from] a family... little calculated to dissipate the reserve and gloom of a depressed and melancholy youth; puritanical, severe, and formal in their manners, their relaxations a Bible Society, or a meeting for the conversion of the Jews.... Puritan in religion she was precisian in morals. (pp.12-16)

Similarly Sidonia gives this racial/religious background to "the Spanish prior, Alonzo Lara," with whom Tancred is to stay in Jerusalem: "'He calls me cousin; he is a Nuevo of the fourteenth century. Very orthodox; but the love of the old land and the old language have come out in him'" (p.125). Eva

gives her own background:

> "My grandfather is a Bedoueen sheikh, chief of one of the most powerful tribes of the Desert. My mother was his daughter. He is a Jew; his whole tribe are Jews; they read and obey the five books, live in tents, have thousands of camels, ride horses of the Nedjed breed, and care for nothing except Jehovah, Moses, and their mares." (pp.191-2)

In each case family history is considered in relation to race and regligion - Fakredeen, whose religious affiliations change frequently, can even defend that characteristic by family precedent:

> "We are literally descended from the standard-bearer of the Prophet, and my own estates... have been in our registered possession for nearly eight hundred years. Our ancestors became Christians to conciliate the Maronites. Now tell me: in Europe, an English or French prince who wants a throne, never hesitates to change his religion, why should I be more nice? I am of that religion which gives me a sceptre...." (p.202)

Apart from Disraeli's changing use of family background, one can look to the character of the hero to see Tancred as a further development of Disraeli's art. Tancred provides further evidence of the progressively more passive men in Disraeli's novels. Tancred's original intention to travel to Jerusalem is twice nearly destroyed - by his attraction, first, to Lady Constance Rawleigh, and then to Lady Bertie and Bellairs. When he finally arrives there, he is kidnapped and kept prisoner by Sheikh Amalek and then duped into helping Fakredeen's intrigues; it is no understatement when he says, "'I have been the unconscious agent in petty machinations"' (p.465). Furthermore, the manner in which Disraeli narrates the story strengthens this impression. Book IV. Ch. VII, for example, recounts Tancred's interview with the Angel of Arabia, but previously in Book IV, Ch. VI, his

illness and recovery subsequent to the interview have been described. In this way the central mystic conversation may stand on its own, but the reader already knows that its consequences for Tancred are minimal. Also, on the two occasions when Tancred is seen in action, at the fight before his kidnapping and in the battle when he leads the Ansareys against the Ottomans, his role is made to seem unimportant. On the first occasion the description takes less than a paragraph (p.235), and in the second it is perhaps as well that his actions are not subjected to too much scrutiny, since Tancred is leading the Ansareys against the force which has come to rescue Eva, the very outcome he desires.[6] What description there is of the engagement is given second-hand by Hillel; the only first-hand account there is, is less heroic, describing Tancred's subsequent flight into the desert.

What one sees Tancred doing most is talking, not performing. The major effective actors here are the women - one has to omit Fakredeen who is constantly busy but in a series of complex intrigues which one cannot believe will ever come to fruition. Lady Bertie and Bellairs is "'the most inveterate female gambler in Europe'" (p.165). Eva is her father's messenger, negotiator both for him and Fakredeen, and physician to Tancred. Astarte is sole ruler of the Ansareys. The progessively increasing passivity of Disraeli's heroes is not accidental, nor is the growing strength of the women. Disraeli more and more came to see the progress of his

6. What remains a bizarre inconsistency of behaviour in Tancred becomes the central scene in Lothair. In the latter the hero, who manages to support both sides in the struggle of the Italian republicans against Rome, is wounded fighting for one side, and claimed as a hero in the cause of the other, before ultimately shaking off both claims. However, Lothair's inconsistency and the claims on his loyalty are thematically crucial. See ahead, Ch. 7.

heroes as inevitable. Leslie Stephen says, "The youthful heroes of Disraeli's early novels are creative; in his later they become chiefly receptive."[7] Whether the questions that they face are political, social or religious, the answers are known, and very often by the women. In Sybil, as I have indicated, the hero and the heroine have something to teach each other but here, Tancred has much to learn from Eva, little to impart.

If then, we can accept that various aspects of Tancred are developments of characteristics seen in the other books of the trilogy, let us now turn to the central argument of the novel, which concerns the necessity of basing politics on religion. The connection of the two is not new. As Arthur Frietzsche notes, "politics and religion are found blended in Disraeli's novels with surprising frequency."[8] Tancred announces the connection early on, in the scene in which he refuses to stand for Parliament until he has settled his religious questioning: "'In nothing, whether it be religion, or government, or manners, sacred or political or social life, do I find faith; and if there be no faith, how can there be duty? Is there such a thing as religious truth? Is there such a thing as political right?'" (p.49). In her first attempt to solve the problem of her recalcitrant son the Duchess turns to her friend the Bishop, "' because, you see, it is a case political as well as theological, and the bishop is a great statesman as well as the

7. Stephen, p.112.

8. Frietzsche, Disraeli's Religion, p.6.

first theologian of the age '" (p.68). This schematic approach continues after the Bishop's attempt: "'We have failed with a bishop; we will now try a man of the world'" (p.77).

Sidonia also makes the connection between these two aspects of Tancred: "He perceived that though, at this moment, Tancred was as ignorant of the world as a young monk, he possessed all the latent qualities which in future would qualify him to control society" (p.124). The very character of Tancred's musings adds further weight: "In the imaginery interviews in which he had disciplined his solitary mind, his antagonists had been statesmen, prelates, sages, and senators" (pp.106-7). When praying on Mount Sinai, before the Angel of Arabia appears to him, Tancred describes the malaise of the world: "'A profound melancholy has fallen on the spirit of man. The priests doubts, the monarch cannot rule'" (p.289). And at the end of the novel, he is still demanding that the one depend on the other: "'unless we bring man nearer to heaven, unless governments become again divine, the insignificance of the human scheme must paralyse all effort'" (p.481).

Disraeli describes the times as "our agitated age, when the principles of all institutions, sacred and secular, have been called in question" (p.71). Like the Duchess' picture of the Bishop, Disraeli continues the mixture of divine and political power, describing the Bishop Nicodemus as "a prelate, and a prelate of great power... prime councillor of the patriach, and chief prompter of those measures that occasioned the civil war of 1841" (p.351). He also describes Moses as both the

"human instrument... entrusted with the redemption of an Arabian tribe from a state of Fellaheen to Bedoueen existence" and "the organ of an eternal revelation of the Divine will" (p.228). Disraeli's description of Fakredeen's problems of uniting different religions into one nation further supports the religious-political connection, in such risible esoteric complexities as "should the Christian Caimacam govern the Christian Mookatas, as well as such Druses as lived mixed with the Christians in the Christian Mookatas, and the Druse Caimacam in the Druse country exercise the same rights?" (p.347). Perhaps most important of all, the central mystic experience of the novel, Tancred's interview with the Angel, attempts a summary of world history, showing the connection between religion and government: "'All had been prepared. The Caesars had conquered the world to place the Laws of Sinai on the throne of the Capitol'" (p.290).

Without detracting from the religious aspect of the central argument, it is clear that there is a strong racial element in it. Disraeli never allowed Tancred to be attracted to Judaism - which he defined as merely unfulfilled Christianity[9] - but compared to Europeans, the Jewish race is constantly regarded as the receptacle of wisdom, in a way that reminds one of his attitude to the Saxon peasants and Norman aristocracy in Sybil: while the former may have their virtues, and the latter may be criticised, it is the latter who are the natural leaders. It could be argued that this Jewish superiority is the real basis of the novel; the central core which Disraeli wishes to clothe

9. See Benjamin Disraeli, Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography (London, 1852), Ch. XXIV. Subsequent quotations will be placed, where possible, in the body of the text.

in fiction. If Chartism seems the subject of Sybil, but is used to give substance to the real subject, the condition of the people, so in Tancred Christianity's role may seem to be what is under discussion, while in fact the Jewish race as the source of all spiritual enlightenment is the real subject.

M.F. Modder oversimplifies Disraeli's motivation when he says, "The grand object in Disraeli's Tancred was to show the absurdity of denying full emancipation to a race that had given so much to modern civilization."[10] Disraeli's interest in the subject of the removal of the civil disabilities of Jewish citizens came only after Baron Lionel de Rothschild's election to Parliament in June 1847, three months after Tancred was published, and his biography of Lord George Bentinck, which contains such an argument, was not to appear until 1851.

Brandes sees Tancred as motivated by outrage at the persecution of Jews in Damascus and Rhodes in 1840,[11] and as an attempt by Disraeli to attack the prejudices against Jews which were frustrating his attempts to become the Tory leader. Contemporary writers did recognize the disadvantage that Disraeli's race caused him. The subject of the following quotation is anti-semitism: "We fancy that we perceive the continued prevalence of this ungenerous feeling in the recent attacks of a large portion of the press upon Benjamin Disraeli."[12]

10. M.F. Modder, The Jew in the Literature of England (Philadelphia, 1939), pp.207-8.

11. See Brandes, pp.267-9.

12. George Gilfillan, A Third Gallery of Portraits (Edinburgh, 1854), p.406.

Although Disraeli may have suffered from such prejudice, he accepted racial distinctions and would have accepted the unequivocal statement of a reviewer of Tancred that "The distinction of races, the characteristic physical features, and varying mental capacities of Hebrew, Negro, Teuton and Celt, are too real and too obvious to escape observation."[13] Where Disraeli did differ from his contemporaries was in his unswerving and staunch support of the Jewish race within such racial distinctions. As Arthur Frietzsche says, "It is notable that Disraeli trots out these dogmas in every case only as an introduction to a laudatory discussion of the Jewish race and no other."[14]

How then did Disraeli attempt to embody "these dogmas" in his fiction? He began in a way that is again very reminiscent of Sybil. In that novel Disraeli had used English philanthropy for the wretched plight of foreigners to castigate them for their ignorance of wretchedness at home. In Tancred too, the reader is constantly shown comparisons between England and foreign countries, though here Disraeli is attempting to show their interdependence. There are personal connections: the Bellamont family owes much of its prominence to the skilful use of its political support during the American and French Revolutions. The family of the Duchess of Bellamont is strong in its support of a mission to convert the Roman Catholic Irish to Protestantism. There are constant foreign references:

13. The Christian Remembrancer, op.cit., p.524.

14. Frietzsche, Disraeli's Religion, p.11.

"Mrs. Guy Flouncy had invaded society... like the English in India. Social invasions are... sustained at immense cost, like the French in Algiers" (p.90). A similar society hostess would "line her staircase with American plants," decorate her house "like a Russian palace" and have "a banquet worthy of the Romans" (p.94). Tancred considers the temptations that keep him in London in these terms: "a precious stone made him stumble who was to have scaled the Alps" (p.107). Whereas in Coningsby London is seen as a modern city of the industrial world, in Tancred it is compared with other world capitals – "the Romes, the Babylons, the hundred portals of the Pharoahs... Paris... Constantinople" (p.112).

Beyond this general frame of reference, which keeps the idea of international connections constantly before us, the general spiritual degeneracy of Europe, which has turned away from Eastern teachings, is commented upon, and most often by Tancred. At Sidonia's dinner party (Book II, Ch. XIV), he makes comparisons with the situation in Italy, China, Spain, Germany, France and England. He thinks (wrongly) of Lady Bertie and Bellairs that "in the old days, truly the good old days, when the magnetic power of Western Asia on the Gothic races had been more puissant, her noble yet delicate spirit might have been found beneath the walls of Ascalon or by the purple waters of Tyre" (p.158). His dominant wish, "to see an angel at Manchester" (p.74), reveals his desire to reintroduce Eastern spiritual concepts into the West. When Sybil expressed a similar sentiment - "'It sometimes seems to me... that nothing short of the descent of angels can save the people of this kingdom'" (p.199) - her emphasis was on the condition of the people.

Disraeli as narrator firmly supports Tancred in his opinions; for instance he states that "the life of a British peer is mainly regulated by Arabian law and Syrian customs at this moment" (p.153), while Tancred thinks of his own culture that "These Arabian laws regulated his life" (p.264). Disraeli takes Tancred's international comparisons even further when he asks whether "Palestine is like Normandy or Yorkshire, or even Attica or Rome?" (p.170). If Tancred cannot accept the mundane advice of the Bishop, Disraeli will explain what the prelate lacks: "The Church of England, mainly from its deficiency of oriental knowledge... has fallen of late years into great straits" (p.70). If Tancred worries about his delay in leaving London, Disraeli criticises the fish dinner he gives instead of "the embalmed joint, which ought only to have smoked amid the ruins of Thebes or by the cataracts of Nubia" (p.155); the entertainment is held at "the Isle of Dogs! The Isle of Dogs! It should at least be Cyprus!" (p.158).

The very divisions of the book are geographical: Book I in rural England, Book II in London, Book III in Jerusalem, Book IV in the desert, Book V travelling in the East with Fakredeen and Book VI among the Ansareys. It is predictable that the emphasis and the occasion of the international comparisons vary with their position in the novel. In the opening two books, England is the object of the comparison and often the contrast will be introduced by Tancred's longing to go to Jerusalem: "His thoughts were far away amid cities of the desert, and by the palmy banks of ancient rivers" (p.89); even with

Lady Constance Rawleigh he is "dreaming of Jerusalem" (p.105). The other main reason for their occurence here is Lady Bertie and Bellairs' pretence that she shares his desires: "'I ought,'" she says,"'to have taken up my palmer's staff, and never have rested content till I had gathered my shell on the strand of Joppa'" (p.131). She rather spoils this picture though: "'If Jerusalem were only a place one could get at... if there were a railroad to it for example'" (p.162).[15]

When the venue has moved to the East, Disraeli's methods to achieve similar constant comparisons seem similar. Speaking of the heat of Jerusalem he casts his net wide: "Bengal, Egypt, even Nubia, are nothing to it.... Everything is so flaming and so clear, that it would remind one of a Chinese painting, but that the scene is one too bold and wild for the imagination of the Mongol race" (p.182). Downing Street is described as the "happy spot, where they draw up constitutions for Syria and treaties for China with the same self-complacency and the same success!" (p.347). He continues the series of pronouncements on England's dependance on the East - "The life and property of England are protected by the laws of Sinai" (p.265), and talks of Moses as "the teacher, whose doctrines have modelled civilised Europe" (p.169). Tancred himself is seen in a welter of almost global references:

15. I think R.A. Levine is being too specific when he says,"We remember that Tancred was appalled when Lady Bertie and Bellairs suggested a railroad from London to Jerusalem.... Symbolically, the railroad in this context represents the opposition view to the new Toryism. To Young England it represents the wrong way to salvation: the expedient, Utilitarian view." Levine, "Disraeli's'Tancred,'" pp.78-9. He is not wrong in this interpretation, but more important is the reader's amusement at the clash between ideals and cynicism.

> He was not here like an Indian Brahmin, who visits Europe from a principle of curiosity, however rational or however refined. The land which the Hindoo visits is not his land, nor his father's land; the laws which regulate it are not his laws, and the faith which fills its temples is not the revelation that floats upon his sacred Ganges. But for this English youth, words had been uttered and things done, more than thirty centuries ago, in this stony wilderness, which influenced his opinions and regulated his conduct every day of his life, in that distant and seagirt home, which, at the time of their occurrence, was not as advanced in civilisation as the Polynesian groups or the islands of New Zealand. (p.265)

But generally in the Eastern section of the book, England becomes subordinate within the comparison. The opening of Book III is typical:

> [Jerusalem] is a city of hills, far more famous than those of Rome: for all Europe has heard of Sion and of Calvary, while the Arab and the Assyrian, and the tribes and nations beyond, are as ignorant of the Capitolian and Aventine Mounts as they are of the Malvern or the Chiltern Hills. (p.167)

And the "Emirs and Sheikhs... in point of race and antiquity of established family, are superior to the aristocracy of Europe" (p.345).

As Disraeli used Lady Bertie and Bellairs' presence to confirm Eastern comparisons, so here in the second section he uses Fakredeen and others to support interest in the West. Speare points out that Fakredeen and Tancred are comparable: "If Tancred is representative of Young England, Fakredeen, who is really a copy of Francis of Kazin, is intended to represent Young Syria."[16] He argues further similarities, in their opinions on religion, government and philosophy in a way which

16. Speare, pp.88-9.

is, I think, mistaken. Their similarity lies only in their situation. As Schwartz says, "The political world of the Mid-East parodies the intrigues of English politics."[17] Fakredeen is a ruler and Tancred is heir to "an estate scarcely inferior in size and revenue to some continental principalities" and he will "dwell in palaces and castles" (p.15). (This may help to explain the general belief in the East that he is Queen Victoria's younger brother.) Both men are concerned about the relationship of religion and government, but whereas Tancred's main concern is the former, Fakredeen's is the latter. To quote Leslie Stephen, "A Syrian Vivian Grey is introduced to us, whose intrigues are as audacious and futile as those of his English parallel, but whose office seems to be the purely satirical one of interpreting Tancred's lofty dreams into political intrigues."[18] Their dissimilarity is revealed by Tancred's reaction when he fully realizes how Fakredeen has been using him - "'I must return to the Desert to recover the purity of my mind'" (p.465) - and by Eva's description of Tancred's faith after his entanglement with Fakredeen - "'Now it is all mixed up with intrigue, and politics, and management, and baffled schemes, and cutting arts of men'" (p.485).

Fakredeen, like the Baron von Konigstein in Vivian Grey, is more an example of what the hero will become, if he does not base his action on proper principles. The positive connection between Eastern and Western views of politics comes in such

17. Schwarz, "Progressive Dubiety," p.16.

18. Stephen, p.127.

descriptions as follows:

> Among those mountains we find several human races, several forms of government, and several schemes of religion, yet everywhere liberty: a proud, feudal aristocracy; a conventual establishment, which in its ramifications recalls the middle ages; a free and armed peasantry, whatever their creed. (p.338)

Schwartz comments, "In the Lebanese mountains, Tancred discovers the mirror of Young England's dreams."[19] In this passage Disraeli is at pains to show how the application of true principles of government is available to all countries and races, of West or East. In theory this should mean that what Tancred learns in the East will be available to him to apply in England. In fact that will not be the case.

However, whether Fakredeen is a truly comparable figure or an "awful warning," he is certainly a means of extending East-West comparisons. In Book III, Ch. V, in which he discusses the Eastern situation with Eva, Fakredeen mentions France, England, India, Greece, Belgium,Portugal, Spain and Russia, Sir Stratford Canning, Lord Aberdeen, Guizot, Palmerston and Louis Philippe. When reading a tortuous "explanation" of Eastern affairs, such as that in this chapter, almost inevitably the question arises whether Disraeli expected his readers to understand, let alone believe it. Tancred's own description of Fakredeen's affairs, "such a jumble of sublime aspirations and equivocal conduct; such a total disregard of means, such complicated plots, such a fertility of perplexed and tenebrous intrigue!" (p.257) is entirely justified. Surely their importance

19. Schwarz, "Progressive Dubiety," p.16.

is less their feasibility than their support of one of the central theses of the novel: that the affairs of nations are inextricably linked, and ought to be on a sound (i.e., religious) basis. Even the delightful opinions of Pasqualigo and Barizy of the Tower - "'The laws of England require war if royal blood be spilt....' 'Palmerston... is in exile; he is governor of the Isle of Wight'" (pp.237-8) - serve the same purpose.

Despite similar techniques being employed, there are some very telling differences between the two parts of the novel. It has already been noted that in the English section of the book there are few and only general criticisms of England put forward, and in the second part of the book they become stronger. Monypenny and Buckle make the general point about the trilogy that "as the theme grows higher, passing from party in Coningsby to the people in Sybil and religion in Tancred, the detachment from the world and the readiness to flout and trample upon it grow more marked."[20] But one can be more specific: what they call detachment turns into a growing disgust of Northern peoples. Perhaps the first instance of this is the description of Colonel Brace, "with his large ruddy face, his swaggering, sweltering figure, his flourishing whiskers, and his fat hands" (p.223). This is shortly followed by the description of: "some flat-nosed Frank, full of bustle and puffed up with self-conceit (a race spawned perhaps in the morasses of some Northern forest hardly yet cleared)" (p.226-7). Freeman and Truemen, Tancred's servants, are described as displaying "that stupid composure and dogged conceit which distinguish English

20. Monypenny and Buckle, I.856.

servants in situations which must elicit from all other persons some ebullition of feeling" until their master is "mortified at their brutality" (p.354). But even these "Frankish" servants are saved by the influence of the East, and can be seen treating the great Sheikh with proper protocol, "following the instruction of an attendant of the Emir Fakredeen" (p.267). They learn to recognize quality, comparing Fakredeen's castle in Canobia with that of the Bellamonts: "'This is the first gentleman's seat I have seen since we left England,' said Freeman. 'There must have been a fine coming of age here,' rejoined Trueman" (p.339). Even Fakredeen is finally accepted by them: "'The Hameer is a noble gentleman, every inch of him, and I am very glad my lord has got a companion of his own kidney'" (p.364).

The difference in attitude to Europe is signified even by a change of name. In a passage criticising European meals and their preparation, Disraeli writes,

> Tancred could not refrain from contrasting the silent, business-like way in which the Shehaabs, the Talhooks, and Djinblats, and the Habeish performed the great operation that was going on, with the conversation which is considered an indispensable accompaniament of a dinner in Franguestan; for we must no longer presume to call Europe by its beautiful oriental name of Christendom. (p.306)

The identification of the narrator's view with those of Tancred mentioned earlier is apparent in the quotation, when Tancred's reflections lead straight into those of the narrator ("Tancred could not... we must"). This disgust at Northerners eventually comes directly from Tancred when he says, "'I am... sprung from a horde of Baltic pirates, who never were heard of during the greater annals of the world!'" (p.427).

Finally, in Book V, Ch. VI, there is an extraordinary passage which unites disgust with Northerners with racial praise of the Jews. After describing how Eva and her family celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, Disraeli imagines what celebration of the same festival must be like for a European Jew,

> born and bred in the Judenstrasse of Hamburg or Frankfort, or rather in the purlieus of our Houndsditch or Minories, born to hereditary insult, without any education, apparently without a circumstance that can develop the slightest taste, or cherish the least sentiment for the beautiful, living among fogs and filth, never treated with kindness, seldom with justice. (p.389)

In a sympathetic and moving account he describes making the bower and performing the ritual "as if he were in the pleasant villages of Galilee, beneath its sweet and starry sky" (p.390), when "a party of Anglo-Saxons, very respectable men, ten-pounders.... pass the house.... '[I]t's those cursed Jews! we've a lot of 'em here. It is one of their horrible feasts.... However, things are not as bad as they used to be: they used always to crucify little boys at these hullabaloos, but now they only eat sausages made of stinking pork'" (pp.390-1). Disraeli's attitude to the respective cultures of East and West is made abundantly clear. Walter Sichel comments that "the passage is the more remarkable because Disraeli's father instances this very festival as one of the obsolete and fanatical absurdities that unfit the Old Testament religion for its proper fulfilment by the New."[21]

21. Sichel, Disraeli, p.300.

The ending of Tancred provides another example of how the relationship of East and West is embodied. Richard A. Levine says, "aristocracy and trade were joined in Coningsby ... and the new Toryism and the people in Sybil.... Now, as if to cap the regeneration, i.e. to make the new England complete, England is joined with the East.[22] How symbolic Disraeli's fictional marriages are has been mentioned previously, and Brandes spells it out for us: "England and the East enter into a symbolic union in [the] persons" of Tancred and Eva.[23] But this is imprecise. Tancred's proposal, though no doubt honourable, is not immediately clear: "'tell me... that our united destinies shall advance the sovereign purpose of our lives'" (p.486). This may well refer to marriage, but since Eva's response is to faint rather than reply, we cannot be sure. Before their interview can be concluded the novel ends: "The Duke and Duchess of Bellamont had arrived at Jerusalem" (p.487). John Holloway is surely correct when he sees that this too can be understood in the same terms as Levine and Brandes understand the putative marriage: "it is surely not just a rhetorical flourish, but indicates, besides this, that Tancred's parents have at last felt the power of those traditional influences that meant so much to their son."[24]

The culture of these two societies is made apparent to the reader in a manner not dissimilar to the way Disraeli characterised the families in Coningsby by their great houses.

22. Levine, "Disraeli's 'Tancred,'" p.77.

23. Brandes, p.284.

24. Holloway, p.108n.

In this novel it is the social occasions which are revealing. The book begins with the celebrations at Tancred's coming-of-age, and the whole opening Book is full of the bustle and enjoyment of it, though even here there are touches that render it significant. We have already commented on the unity it shows, but we should also recognize a religious connotation, joined to a typical East-West reference in "'The son of the Duke of Bellamont comes of age at Easter; it is to be a business of the thousand and one nights'" (p.5). The speaker here is Leander the chef, who is to cook at the celebrations. When he is in despair at the apparent lack of appreciation of his art Lord Eskdale puts his task to him in a different light:

> "Why I wished you to come down here, Leander, was not to receive the applause of my cousin and his guests, but to form their taste." Here was a great idea; exciting and ennobling....Leander... had a right to fame, but it was also his duty to form and direct public taste.... They had been like Cossacks in a picture-gallery; but the Clanronalds, the Hampshires, the Hulls, would return to their homes impressed with a great truth, that there is a difference between eating and dining.... Leander had a mission to perform. (pp.38-9)

On one's initial reading this simply looks like part of the social fun of the opening section, but the notion of a man with a mission becomes central to the book when Tancred announces his quest, and the cultural importance of hospitality and social behaviour grow in importance as the book develops. Fine food forming part of a cultural mission can also be regarded quite seriously. Disraeli's ability to combine sincerity and humour is obvious here.

The next group of occasions takes place in London and is part of the attempt to trap Tancred in society: the dance

at the Deloraines, the déjeuner at the Flounceys, dinner with Sidonia, Tancred's own fish supper. At the Deloraine's Tancred meets Lady Constance Rawleigh, whose religious views are so unsound. His invitation to Mrs. Flouncey's comes from a person he has never met. The reader's disappointment at Sidonia's other guests and Disraeli's own comments on the fish dinner have been mentioned. The growing disapproval of social life as a means in itself, without its being part of a cultural heritage, is made clear.

The picture changes again as the scene changes to the East. The divan of Besso, with its luxurious appointments and constant hospitality, is described almost immediately (Book II, Ch. II). After waking in Eva's kiosk, Tancred is fed and offered a pipe (Book II, Ch.V). After his kidnapping Fakredeen offers Tancred his own tent and feeds him (Book IV, Ch.II). Once Tancred is freed, Fakredeen takes him to his castle at Canobia, where there is a ceremonial feast (Book V, Ch.II).

Nor are these social occasions isolated from the other patterns in the novel. Disraeli's description of the imaginary Houndsditch Jew's celebration of the Feast of the Tabernacles is occasioned by his description of Besso entertaining Tancred at the same feast in Damascus (Book V, Ch.VI). In that episode the connection between race, religion and culture, represented by hospitality, are brought directly together.

Perhaps one more example will help to illustrate how Disraeli uses interlocking aspects of his fiction to support

his argument. In Book I the chef's preparations for the celebrations of Tancred's birthday and Leander's new conception of it as a mission are described. In Book V, Ch. II, there is a great feast at Fakredeen's castle. The relative positions of Fakredeen and Tancred, and Freeman's deinition of the castle as "'the first gentleman's seat'" (p.339), make a comparison almost inevitable; nor are we disappointed. In England,

> the kitchen of Montacute Castle was of the old style, fitted for baronial feasts. It covered a great space, and was very lofty.... The steady blaze of two colossal fires was shrouded by vast screens. Everywhere, rich materials and silent artists; business without bustle, and the all-pervading magic of method. Philippon was preparing a sauce; Dumoreau, in another quarter of the spacious chamber, was arranging some truffles; the Englishman, Smit, was fashioning a cutlet. Between these three generals of division aides-de-camp perpetually passed, in the form of active and observant marmitons, more than one of whom, as he looked on the great masters around him... exclaimed to himself..., "And I also will be a cook." (p.36)

In this early section of the book Disraeli is not developing the criticism of things Western which is to come later, so the scene is full of approbation, "rich materials and... artists... great artists." But there is also a mundane tone: "the steady blaze... shrouded by... screens... business... preparing... arranging... fashioning." If there is magic, it is the "all-pervading magic of method," and is carried out by foreigners. But in the following description of the kitchen at Canobia, note the richness and vitality of the prose:

> The kitchen of Canobia was on a great scale, though simple as it was vast. It was formed for the occasion. About fify square pits... had been dug on the table-land in the vicinity of the castle.... [A] rustic gridiron of green wood [was] suspended over each pit, which was filled with charcoal, and which yielded an equal and continuous heat to the animal reposing on the gridiron: in some instances a wild boar, in others a sheep - occasionally a couple of gazelles.... While this roasting was going on,

> they filled the stomachs of the animals with lemons gashed with their daggers, and bruised pomegranates, whose fragrant juice, uniting with the bubbling fat, produced an aromatic and rosy gravy. The huntsmen were the cooks, but the greatest order was preserved; and though the Emirs and the Great Sheikhs, heads of houses, retiring again to their divans, occupied themselves with their nargillies, many a mookatadgi mixed with the servants and slaves, and delighted in preparing this patriarchal banquet, which indeed befitted a castle and a forest. Within the walls they prepared rice, which they piled on brazen and pewter dishes, boiled gallons of coffee, and stewed the liver of the wild boars and the gazelles in the golden wine of Lebanon. (pp.358-9)

Disraeli here displays a greater sense that he actually understands these culinary arts, all of which are described so as to emphasize sensual pleasures, not to suggest possible future careers for the assistants. The huntsmen themselves, rather than foreigners, perform the tasks.

One might go even further: if Tancred's England has lost touch with its spiritual roots, so, perhaps has its cuisine. The kitchen at Montacute was "of the old style, fitted for baronial feasts"; that at Canobia, however, was "formed for the occasion," which was a "patriarchal banquet" as befits "a castle and a forest." In Coningsby the Christmas festivities at St. Geneviève recommend the Young England philosophy to the reader; in Lothair the luxuriance of the description of Corisande's garden plays an identical part in recommending the culture behind it to the reader. While the venues from Coningsby and Lothair are English, the above quotation from Tancred describes the East. The sympathies of the book as a whole and the hero in particular are all taken up by Eastern culture. Lothair can return to England after his involvement with the cause of European

revolutionaries; Tancred cannot. As Schwartz notes, "Tancred abandons his English values and European heritage."[25] It is in this difference that the failure of the book lies, and to see why failure occurs we must now look at what most separates Tancred from the more integrated aspects of the trilogy.

Blake says,

> It is probably best to regard the trilogy as expressing two distinct themes. Tancred is the vehicle for Disraeli's own highly idiosyncratic views on race and religion which are also set out in his Life of Lord George Bentinck. They really have little connection with ideas in Coningsby and Sybil.[26]

The Christian Remembrancer found the division apparent, even in the sub-titles:

> Coningsby had turned mainly on the theory of Whiggism and Conservatism: Sybil had been directed principally on the social evils of the relations between rich and poor, the labouring man and his employer. It is true that these names afforded no indication of the line of the work; but something might have been gathered by a discerning guesser from their second titles of "The New Generation" and "The Two Nations." Here, however, we were quite at fault. If Tancred afforded no hint, "The New Crusade" opened an unlimited field of perplexity.... It would have seemed an unlikely guess, that we were about to be presented with a genuine tale of Palestine, a quasi-religious novel, a new crusade on the model of the old.[27]

Though the themes of Tancred are not those of the previous two books, as we have seen they had been suggested earlier and could have been realised in a complementary way. That they are not

25. Schwarz, "Progressive Dubiety," p.13.

26. Blake, Disraeli, p.194.

27. The Christian Remembrancer, op.cit., p.522.

lies essentially in the book's movement to Palestine. Despite (or perhaps because of) the deep impression that his trips abroad made on Disraeli, most importantly that to the Near East in 1830-1, he was never able successfully to integrate material from them into his fiction - the latter parts of Vivian Grey and Contarini Fleming bear witness to that. It seems clear that the two parts of Tancred, the first in England, and the second in Palestine, were meant to be complementary; the first to establish the need for the spiritual reform of English society and the second the source of its possible regeneration. But despite all the careful links, described above, the two halves do not come together. The principal reason for this lies in the argument. How can one continue to take Tancred seriously as a possible hero in view of the book's growing pro-Jewish, anti-European feeling? How can the union of Eva and Tancred be regarded as fruitful when racial purity has been stressed so forcibly? As Monckton Milnes puts it, Tancred "enunciates the sublime doctrine of 'fraternity under a common father' in the same breath with the assertion of the indefeasible superiority of one race over all mankind."[28]

Had the novel retained its purely religious character Tancred might have been capable of the transition; but the racial element becomes too strong. It is significant that Tancred receives the new revelation on Mount Sinai, not, say, at the Holy Sepulchre. Disraeli cannot produce an angel in Manchester and

28. Milnes, p.143. Blake calls this article "to this day the best statement for the prosecution against Disraeli's novels." Blake, Disraeli, p.206.

Tancred cannot return to England. In other words, it is impossible for the hero to fulfil the role that he has been given. Perhaps Disraeli was aware of the problem. He wrote to Lady Londonderry, "My hero, whose name is Tancred, will make his appearance, I hope, in a month. He has turned out a much more troublesome and unmanageable personage than I anticipated."[29]

In Coningsby and Sybil, though Disraeli's interpretations of history may not be accepted by the reader, they are not at odds with his fiction. Here the very concepts he wished to espouse could not be integrated into the fiction. In England Tancred is similar to all Disraeli's other young men discovering how to order his life, but Disraeli locates the source of his knowledge in the traditions of the Holy Land and provides no means by which it can be translated back to England except by Tancred himself, and he, being a Gentile, is as we have seen rendered ineligible for the task. Once in the near East the balance of Disraeli's emotional commitment swings so far that Tancred is shown as unworthy to transmit its spiritual learning, in himself, in his immature entanglement with Fakredeen and the Ansareys, and by virtue of being a "flat-nosed Frank" (p.269). If the book's "grand object... is to draw the relationship between Judaism and Christianity,"[30] it must be regarded as a failure.

It is this illogicality in the argument which, I think,

29. Disraeli, quoted in The Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., Benjamin Disraeli The Romance of a Great Career 1804-1881 (London, 1926), p.105.

30. Rabbi David Philipson, The Jew in English Fiction (Cincinnati, 1889), p.109.

has given rise to the derision at Disraeli's phrase "'the great Asian mystery'" (p.124). He had used a similar phrase in Sybil, where it gave rise to no amusement: "Conservatism, that mighty mystery of the nineteenth century" (p.312). This latter phrase, no more explicable in itself, has a book behind it which makes the concept comprehensible; in Tancred the phrase remains a mystery.

Perhaps the example of Baroni and his family will help to make the point clear. Baroni is Tancred's mentor and guide and has previously been in Sidonia's service - "'I shared his adventures, and I imbibed some of his wisdom; and the consequence is, that I always ought to know what to say, and generally what to do'" (p.254). The very fact that Sidonia has to be represented by someone else here is significant of the central split in the book. Sidonia is only seen in London, Baroni only in the East. Baroni's role is tied up with the growing animus against Europeans which we have seen so invalidates the book's argument. He alone stays with and helps Tancred:

> Notwithstanding all the prescient care of the Duke and Duchess of Bellamont, it was destined that the stout arm of Colonel Brace should not wave by the side of their son when he was first attacked by the enemy, and now that he was afflicted by a most severe, if not fatal illness, the practised skill of the Doctor Roby was also absent.... It cannot be denied, that if the theological attainments of the Rev. Mr. Bernard had been of a more profound and comprehensive character, it is possible that Lord Montacute might not have deemed it necessary to embark upon this new crusade, and ultimately to find himself in the deserts of Mount Sinai. However this may be, one thing was certain, that Tancred had been wounded without a single sabre of the Bellamont yeomanry being brandished in his defence; was now lying dangerously ill in an Arabian tent, without the slightest medical assistance; and perhaps was destined to quit this world, not only without the consolation of a priest of his holy church but surrounded by heretics and infidels. (pp.280-1)

Baroni tells Tancred the story of his family in Book IV, Ch. XI, in an episode separately headed "THE HISTORY OF THE BARONI FAMILY." The reader is told not to suppose that it forms "merely an episode in this history" (p.314). Both the heading and the injunction are expressive of disunity. One can clearly see the symbolic importance of the story: the crux of his history is not that Sidonia discovered this astonishingly talented family and established them in their chosen careers, where they now seem to dominate European culture, but that despite their Christian religion, he had recognized them as Jews. The story stresses that aspect of the book which weakens its argument. Richard A. Levine says of the Baronis that "in this family we see in microcosmic form the Hebraeo-Christian concept, the blending of East and West, which is in essence the answer to the riddle of the Asian mystery."[31] This is true, but Tancred himself is of the race which the elder Baroni three times calls "savages." The argument that a racially pure Jew who becomes a Christian is in touch with all sources of spiritual wisdom may have been one that sustained Disraeli personally, and explained the amazing abilities of the Baroni family, but it is not one which can explain what Tancred's position in the world should be. The argument and the fiction are at odds.

Because Tancred is that last of the trilogy written by a rising politician, one might argue that the course of events had made its author a different man from the author of Coningsby

31. Levine, "Disraeli's 'Tancred,'" p.84.

and Sybil. In 1845 the Young England group had broken up over the question of the increased grant to Maynooth, and "the political purpose, in the narrower sense, underlying Coningsby had disappeared with it."[32] If one argues that "the major significance of Young England for [Disraeli]... was literary,"[33] one can see that the disappearance of Young England as a group left Disraeli free to use his fiction in a different, if not a new, way. But Tancred was not the first time that Disraeli had allowed his interest in Jewish affairs to affect his fiction.

The Wondrous Tale of Alroy and The Rise of Iskander, published together in 1833, provide an illuminating comparison and, interestingly, both their heroes are referred to in Tancred. The plot of the shorter work, Iskander, is fairly simple. Iskander is heir to Epirus; although he has been brought up in the Moslem faith by his father's conqueror, Amurath, he is secretly a Christian. He has fought in Amurath's army until he is required to fight against Christians. Then he makes a secret agreement with the Turk's Christian enemy, Hunnaides, that at the moment when his forces are most needed in battle he will retreat to his own country and proclaim its independence. He is joined there by Nicaeus, Prince of Athens, and both Iskander and Hunnaides are successful. Iskander hears that Hunnaides' daughter Iduna, accompanying her father in battle, has been captured by the Turks, whereupon Nicaeus announces his love

32. Monypenny and Buckle, I.850.

33. Swartz and Swartz, p.xv.

for her, and the reader suspects that Iskander feels the same. They plan and carry out her rescue, disguised as a physician and his page. On the journey back to Epirus, Iskander has to fight a rear-guard action while Nicaeus and Iduna escape. Nicaeus becomes jealous and imprisons Iduna in his castle until she will promise to marry him. In a turbulent conclusion, Iduna escapes and is discovered by Iskander and Hunnaides, who again defeat the Turks in a battle in which the repentant Nicaeus dies. Iskander and Iduna are united in a free kingdom.

At the beginning of the story Iskander is outwardly a Moslem Turk, inwardly a Christian Greek: a situation not dissimilar to that in Contarini Fleming, published one year earlier, where within the one character, the statesman and the poet fight for ascendancy, and where flight to the hero's homeland is also necessary before his true identity is realised. "'Themistocles saved Greece and died a Satrap: I am bred one, let me reverse our lots, and die at least a patriot,'" says Iskander (p.387). But it would be false to emphasize this duality, which in Contarini Fleming forms the basis of the book. Though it is the starting point of the story, Disraeli quickly has Iskander realise his true identity and from then on the novella becomes an adventure story.

The similarity with Alroy is obvious. There too the hero, though prince of his people, is the Prince of the Captivity; at the very beginning of the novel he chooses to be the former only, refuses to give tribute to the Moslems, rebels and starts

the process of freeing the Jews. At this early point in the story Raymond Maitre's comment, "Il s'agit dans Alroy de la régénération de la race juive déchue et captive. Les points de vue religieux et politique sont étroitement solidaires," is correct.[34] When Alroy says "'Oh! this contest, this constant bitter, never-ending contest between my fortune and my fancy!'" (p.74), it could be Contarini Fleming speaking. The possible contrast between the two roles available to Alroy, either religious rebel or complaisant ruler, though it is rejected almost immediately, will later become a conflict when as a conqueror he has to decide the extent of his religious commitment. His inability to resolve this conflict results in his downfall.

One could argue that what we see in Tancred is Disraeli trying unsuccessfully to work out both problems again. Iskander and Alroy both very quickly choose which culture they will represent, Iskander the Christian, Alroy the Jewish; Tancred has to try to harness both the European Christian and the Semitic traditions together while only really representing the former, and simultaneously to solve the problem which all three heroes face to a greater or lesser degree, to discover what is the proper relationship between power and faith.

It is significant that Alroy and Iskander were published together, although Disraeli had done much of the writing of Alroy in 1831 during his Eastern tour. In the 1870 General Introduction to the Novels Disraeli claimed an even earlier date

34. Raymond Maitre, Disraeli homme de lettres La personnalité la pensée l'oeuvre littéraire (Paris, 1963), p.203 n.100.

for its inception:

> I had commenced Alroy the year after my first publication, and had thrown the manuscript aside. Being at Jerusalem, and visiting the traditionary Tombs of the Kings, my thoughts recurred to the marvellous career which had attracted my boyhood, and I shortly after finished a work which I began the year after I wrote Vivian Grey.

In other words he began Alroy in 1827 or 1828, took it up again in 1831 and completed it in 1833, taking at least five years in the writing. Even then he was not satisfied with it, for he added Iskander, "designed to provide a contrast with Alroy," telling "the history of a Christian hero placed in a somewhat similar position, but achieving a very different end,"[35] which was written in 1833 on a visit to Bath. Maitre describes The Rise of Iskander as "contrepartie chretienne de l'épopée juive."[36] Is it too fanciful to argue that fourteen years after these linked stories, whose Christian hero Iskander succeeds and whose Jewish hero Alroy fails, Disraeli tried to unite them in Tancred?

In the earlier works the failure or success of the hero is in large part due to the people who surround him: especially important is the woman he marries. In this context the similarities between the three novels are striking. Iskander rescues Iduna when he is disguised as a physician, and at that time,

> he could no longer conceal from himself that the daughter of Hunnaides exercised an influence over his feelings which he was unwilling to encourage.... [I]t was his present duty to concentrate all his thoughts and affection in the cause of his country. (p.419)

35. Monypenny and Buckle, I.203.

36. Maitre, p.17.

Alroy first meets his future wife, the Princess Schirene, when he is disguised as a Physician's slave; while he acknowledges to himself his love for her, he continues on his mission to free his people. The pattern of healer and patient is repeated in Tancred but reversed: there it is Eva who saves the life of the hero when he is ill.

Iduna is emprisoned by Nicaeus and escapes to Iskander, and Schirene, not knowing of Alroy's love for her thinks she is his captive when he conquers Bagdad. Again the pattern is repeated in a reversed form in the later novel. Not only does Eva play an important part in bringing about Tancred's release from captivity, but when she is herself a prisoner of the Queen of the Ansarey, she escapes with Fakredeen while Tancred finds himself assisting her captors. It is as though Disraeli were taking the same ingredients and putting them into different combinations, just as he did in Vivian Grey with the hero, Beckendorff and Von Konigstein. Here every instance places Tancred in a weaker position than the earlier heroes. This is literally true, for Alroy and Iskander can choose which of their two possible roles they will develop, what action they will take, while Tancred cannot. His is the impossible task of trying to combine the two.

The significant difference between the three women lies in their religions. Iduna and Iskander are both Christians, and their marriage presages well. The marriage in Alroy is between "the daughter of the Caliph and a Jew!" (p.72). Jabaster, Alroy's religious advisor, warns him, "'You may be King of Bagdad, but you cannot, at the same time, be a Jew'" (p.156).

This marriage is the first step in Alroy's downfall, because after it Alroy turns to the secular Honain, rather than Jabaster, for advice. In Tancred Disraeli seems to recognize that he cannot go beyond a proposal, since our hero is a Christian and Eva a Jew, and Disraeli has provided no machinery to explain how the gap will be bridged, indeed by stressing racial purity, has removed it as an option. Arthur Frietzsche says of Alroy that "Disraeli was clearly considering the Chosen People on a spiritual plane; race without true faith is shown to be more curse than blessing."[37] To reverse that judgement for Tancred, and say that there faith without race is a curse, clarifies the relationship between the stories.

Iskander's friend Nicaeus, while having "many admirable qualities, was one of those men who are influenced only by their passions, and who, in the affairs of life, are invariably guided by their imagination instead of their reason" (p.431). He is more easily influenced than Iskander and when he captures Iduna, his heart is "distracted by the two most powerful of passions, Love and Jealousy" (p.431). In so many ways he is a sketch of Fakredeen, who, after all, leaves Tancred to fight alongside the Ansarey while he escapes with Eva. Iskander and Nicaeus themselves have been described by B.R. Jerman as "a composite portrait of David Alroy,"[38] reflecting the two sides of his character, the single-minded, religiously faithful rebel, and the weaker, easily influenced pragmatist. These two sides of Alroy are in turn exaggerated in the characters of

37. Frietzsche, Disraeli's Religion, p.10.

38. Jerman, p.177.

his human advisors.

Both Alroy and Tancred are given the boon of angelic advice, the former from the Daughter of the Voice, and the latter from the Angel of Arabia; both also have contrasting human advice, Tancred the man of the world and the bishop, Alroy two brothers, Honain and Jabaster, a set of Disraelian doubles: "Les deux frères Honain et Jabaster symbolisent l'un la souplesse de l'homme politique, l'autre le fanatisme religieux."[39] Comparisons are encouraged between the two men: "'We are the same though different. Day and Night are both portions of Time'" (p.58).[40] Jabaster's ring, which Alroy gives to Honain, is engraved "Parted but one." Frietzsche comments on the division between them: "In the early Alroy, for instance, the hero's fall follows directly his disruption of the union of politics and religion; politics cannot stand alone, and the hero's empire collapses for want of moral force."[41] Tancred can be seen as an attempt to write a positive version of the earlier conflict, to discover a union of politics and religion.

There is an additional factor which emphasizes the division between the two halves of Tancred and that is the style of writing. Disraeli's style has always been subject to criticism. There is, to begin with, what Marius Bewley generously calls "an occasional sloppiness of style," but which John Lucas defines as

39. Maitre, p.284n.

40. One is reminded of the comparison of Venetia and her mother: "One indeed might be compared to a starry night, and the other to a sunny day." Disraeli, Venetia, p.3.

41. Frietzsche, Disraeli's Religion, p.6.

> near illiteracies.... "[S]he smiled through a gushing vision," for example, or "the deep lustre of her dark orb rested on his peering vision; his eye fled from the unequal contest"; or more splendid still, "'Who told you the truth?' said Morley, springing to her side, in a hoarse voice."[42]

Nor is this an example of a purely modern sensibility. In 1870 Harrison similarly pointed out the many absurdities which appear in Disraeli's writing.[43] Although by and large his is an unfair article, one often cannot argue with particular complaints.

More directly to our point, however, is the general criticism of Disraeli's flamboyance of style. Marius Bewley is again kind in his judgement; he says that Disraeli's novels "may occasionally burst their syntactical seams, and their rhetoric [may] burn with a bloom too hectic - or perhaps too florid."[44] Much more typical is an early judgement in the London Magazine: "Many German writers have fallen into the habit of supposing that the merit of imagination is due to sheer extravagance and wild absurdity. This error our author has adopted."[45] Of all his novels, Tancred and Alroy show this aspect of his writing at its most extreme - "When Tancred ... arrives in the Holy Land," writes Gosse, "a flush of pure romance passes over the whole texture of the narrative. Real life is forgotten, and we move in a fabulous but intensely picturesque world of ecstacy and dream."[46] We can instance

42. Bewley, p.7; Lucas, p.153. All the internal quotations are from Sybil.

43. Harrison, pp.654-667.

44. Bewley, p.6.

45. London Magazine, Vol.VII N.S. (1927), p.483.

46. Gosse, p.169.

> They sang... the romance of the Desert, tales of passion and of plunder, of the rescue of women and the capture of camels, of heroes with a lion heart, and heroines brighter and softer than the moon.... Why is the beautiful daughter of Besso pensive and abstracted? What thoughts are flitting over her mind, silent and soft, like the shadows of birds over the sunshiny earth? (pp.291-2)

or,

> It was the semblance of one who, though not young, was still untouched by time; a countenance like an oriental night, dark yet lustrous, mystical yet clear. Thought, rather than melancholy, spoke from the pensive passion of his eyes, while on his lofty forehead glittered a star that threw a solemn radiance on the repose of his majestic features. (p.290)

Perhaps the single most fantastic element in Tancred is the appearance of the Angel of Arabia. Gosse again:"an actual Divine message presently pronounced in Tancred's ears as he stands on the summit of Mount Sinai... is, perhaps, the boldest flight of imagination which occurs in the writings of Disraeli."[47] The author has done his best to prepare us for the occurence. Although Tancred asks for an angel to appear in Manchester, it is in Syria that "one cannot help fancying that angels may have been resting on the mountain tops during the night." (p.222). The actual appearance of the Angel is almost inevitably disappointing; inevitably, firstly because as Stewart notes it "suffers from the undisguised comparison with the Biblical account of Moses on the same spot," but above all because it is written in what has been unerringly described as "fluent journalese."[48] For instance:

47. Ibid.

48. Stewart, Benjamin Disraeli: A List of writings, p.72; Monypenny and Buckle, I.860.

> "Cease, then, to seek in a vain philosophy the solution of the social problem that perplexes you. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality. Fear not, faint not, falter not. Obey the impulse of thine own spirit, and find a ready instrument in every human being." (p.291)

If this is bad, one must grant that Alroy is worse:

> Speed, fleetly speed, thou courser bold, and track the desert's trackless way. Beneath thee is the boundless earth, above thee is the boundless heaven, an iron soil and brazen sky. Speed, swiftly speed, thou courser bold, and track the desert's trackless way. (p.20)

Roth accurately says that this language is "in part Biblical, in part merely fantastic, but always exaggerated and bombastic. Throughout, it is on the verge of poetry (poor poetry, it is true) and here and there degenerates without any notice of the fact into blank, or even into rhymed verse."[49] Lewis Apjohn, commenting on this phenomenon, actually prints Part X, Ch.I, of Alroy in stanzas.[50]

49. Cecil Roth, Benjamin Disraeli: Earl of Beaconsfield (New York, 1952), p.63. One of the verses, "He rose in beauty like the morn" (p.146) is clearly in imitation of Byron's "She walks in beauty like the night" and suggests that the Byronic influence noticed earlier may be one of the causes of Disraeli's excesses of style. In the Preface to his only poem of any length, The Revolutionary Epick (originally published in 1834), Disraeli wrote, "Standing upon Asia, and gazing upon Europe... these mighty continents appeared to me as it were the Rival Principles of Government, that at present contend for the mastery of the world." Benjamin Disraeli, The Revolutionary Epick and Other Poems (London, 1904) ed. W. Davenport Adams, pp.xi-xii . Here again Disraeli felt strongly enough about the clash of European and Asian cultures to believe only poetry capable of treating it; but since he described poetry as "the safety-valve of my passions" (from the "mutilated diary," quoted in Jerman, p.69), it would be poetry of an unrestrained and emotional character.

50. Apjohn, p.59. Even as late as Endymion there remains a trace of the same poetic prose: "and now and then was heard a silver laugh, and now and then was breathed a gentle sigh" (Disraeli, Endymion, p.5). The passage continues, "Servants glided about the suite of summer chambers, occasionally with sherberts and ices." This is strangely oriental for

It is worth while to spend some time on the matter of the language of Alroy because in many ways it was there that Disraeli allowed himself the license which, although present in a lesser degree, was partially responsible for the failure of Tancred. Harrison recognizes their similarity when he talks about "the raving [that] one endured in 'Tancred' and the 'Wondrous Tale.'"[51] One does feel that "Alroy is written with obvious, undiscriminating, disastrous sincerity,"[52] and Disraeli has been punished for it. Perhaps the most extreme comment comes from J.C. Jeaffreson:

> In 1833 he gave the heedless nineteenth century a specimen of his original school of poetry in "The Wondrous Tale of Alroy"... magnificent balderdash as no frantic Bedlamite ever yet equalled. The prayer-book translation of David's psalms, passages from Macpherson's Ossian, and delirium tremens were the raw material of which they were fabricated. Laughter alike expressive of derision and intense amusement at the new absurdity was the only response the muse of innovation received from men.... He had discovered and made known the great principle, that all true poetry was henceforth to be written in sonorous prose.[53]

---

what is a description of a soirée at Zenobia's. Her ideas are mocked there and the overall tone is exceedingly high-falutin'. ("Zenobia was leaning back on a brilliant sofa, supported by many cushions, and a great personage, grey-headed and blue ribboned, who was permitted to share the honours of the high place, was hanging on her animated and inspiring accents. An ambassador... listened with apparent devotion... sometimes a gentleman entered, and pressed the hand of Zenobia to his lips, and then vanished into air.") The tone is clearly part of the mockery; but one wonders whether there is an element of self-mockery in the oriental and "poetic" echoes from his own earlier writings.

51. Harrison, p.662.

52. Apjohn, p.59.

53. Jeaffreson, p.249. In view of the almost universal condemnation of Alroy, perhaps in all fairness I ought to add the only complimentary comment I have come across: "It is a work of genius, absolutely unique, but only the inner circle of Disraelites will ever appreciate it." Walter Frewen Lord, "Lord Beaconfield's Novels," The Nineteenth Century Vol. XLV (1899), p.250.

If only one could accept Paul Bloomfield's view that Alroy is "over-rhetorical and a dead end."[54] The former judgement may be true, but the latter is not, for Alroy lives on in the Palestinian half of Tancred, which "contains much of the same poetic matter with Alroy, but... chastened down with severer taste and displaying a vastly more matured intellect."[55] It is not "chastened down" enough, though; especially not when one remembers that this half of the book ought to be capable of balancing the London half. Though Disraeli's style is never without some exaggeration, there is no way in which the two halves of the book can be brought into conjunction. A parody published in 1849 begins,

> "What majority had they last night, my lord?" asked a fair young man in the Carlton, from a stately personage who was sitting at a table near him, occupied with a bottle of Lafitte. "Fifty-two" was the reply. "How did Peel look when he heard it?"

But"Chapter XLVIII" begins

> Silence reigns beneath the brilliant azure of an Oriental sky; silence, broken only by the silver tinkling of the camel's bell. A noble creature is the camel. Compared with that Caucasian of beasts, the shapeless quadruped of the Northern, is but an ass!
>
> Ever, and anon, through the moist perfumed twilight, steals a delicious breeze. Delicious but melancholy.[56] For in that breeze floats a prophet's sigh.

The conflict of the parts has been recognized; as Brandes says of the whole book, "it falls asunder into two large fragments," and Maitre agrees: "Sans doute, le hiatus entre les deux parties du roman symbolise-t-il l'abîme qui sépare

54. Bloomfield, p.16.

55. Gilfillan, p.410.

56. "De Tankard by Benjamin Dizzyreally Esq.," in Hamilton, ed., p.240.

le monde occidental de l'Orient."[57] The trouble is, of course, that the book's raison d'être is to create a bridge between the two worlds.

J.A. Froude wrote sympathetically of Tancred, that "before the diseases of society could be cured, the creed must be restored to its authority....Disraeli, the politician and the man of the world, was repeating it in a tone which wavered between mockery and earnestness, the mockery, perhaps, being used as a veil to cover feelings more real than they seemed."[58] But "wavering" is not enough. Disraeli needed to find a texture in which his contrasting attitudes could both be presented positively, could have an autonomous existence which was not mutually invalidating. The nearest thing he achieves in this novel is the consistent vocabulary of social occasions which, while it allows for both humorous and earnest interpretations of Eastern and European cultures, is not enough to recompense for the lack of a central argument. Marius Bewley claims that "a serious purpose invariably endeavours to bring all the gorgeousness into line with ends and motives that are socially and politically corrective. This in itself changes and enlarges the quality of the art."[59]

57. Brandes, p.269; Maitre, p.311.

58. Froude, p.166. This idea is supported by Isaiah Berlin; "typical of [Disraeli]: amusing, ironical, not intended to be taken seriously, and yet his deepest belief." Berlin, "Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx and the search for identity", The Jewish Historical Society Transactions, Vol. XXII (1968-9), p.13.

59. Bewley, p.21.

Where Bewley asserts that Disraeli has two styles, one controlling the other, Walter Allen - writing of Coningsby - believes that Disraeli has one style dealing with two different subject matters, in one case successfully, in the other not:

> That formal epigrammatical eighteenth century prose, which is hollow with rhetoric and which falsifies whenever he attempts natural description or the description of high ideals and psychological states, has, when he is dealing with the actual world of politics and intrigue, what one may call a historian's quality. [60]

Ten years later Raymond Williams concurred: "The stucco elegance of Disraeli's writing has a consonance with one kind of political argument. What is intolerable in his descriptions of persons and feelings becomes in his political flights a rather likeable panache."[61] In Tancred, however, there are two styles, humorous for England, fervid for the Near East; but pace Bewley, neither predominates. Indeed they never come within hailing distance of one another.

One of the early criticisms of Tancred was that the "intermingling of sacred and profane, of human and divine, is indeed no light objection to the whole book."[62] Walter Sichel says that Disraeli "constantly alternates between the homely and the outlandish."[63] I would agree with these critical judgements only in the case of Tancred, because the two halves of Disraeli's style, rather than simultaneously illuminating each other, are

60. Allen, p.17.

61. Williams, p.97.

62. The Christian Remembrancer, op.cit., p.526.

63. Sichel, Disraeli, p.309.

separated. The English half is profane, human, political and shrewd, the Eastern is sacred, divine, outlandish, preposterous, unruly and mystical.

The best of Disraeli's writing manages to present two attitudes to a subject simultaneously - the treatment of the Young England philosophy in Coningsby comes immediately to mind - and its characteristic strengths will be discussed in my next chapter, as I believe Lothair is the book in which Disraeli employs this technique most successfully. But there is one further aspect of Alroy which will help to explain both the failure of Tancred and the success of Lothair.

I have argued earlier that in every Disraeli novel there is a creative tension between the factual basis of the book and the encompassing fiction: that in general his novels do "not break into two unrelated halves, empty political generalities on the one hand, and irresponsible though picturesque frivolities on the other."[64] Although Alroy would seem to be the worst possible example of Disraeli's flamboyant poetic excesses, it is not without an element of detachment. There are at the end eighty-two notes, explaining religious and local customs, or supporting the veracity of descriptions or events, many of which are in the form of quotations from Biblical scholars. It is as though Disraeli were trying to give the fantastic element a factual base, while at the same time allowing it its

64. Holloway, p.109.

head. Arthur Frietzsche sees the division as a failure: "He may furnish us with voluminous notes, but of what value are these if the novel seems preposterous?"[65] Brandes also rejects the meagre support offered by the notes: "The supernatural apparatus derived from the Cabbala and the Talmud is superfluous," while for Roth, "the whole is recounted with an absurd wealth of hypothetical local colour."[66] One has to agree with their critical judgement but what has not been noticed is that this is the beginning of the more structural use of alternative versions that was to be so important in Disraeli's later work. The footnotes provide an alternative view, a factual one, of the romance, and one which the reader can compare with it. In Coningsby the known historical development of the Tory party and the fictional career of Coningsby himself will form the basis for comparison; in Sybil the documentary material from government blue books will underline the fiction; and thirty-seven years after the publication of Alroy, Disraeli would publish Lothair, in which the hero's adventures are first described and then misrepresented in a newspaper. The reader's judgement of the relationship between the two accounts is vital to his understanding of the whole novel.

Perhaps a postscript to this study of Tancred may come from his next book, Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography, published in December 1851. In a letter to the subject's brother, Lord Henry Bentinck, in August 1850, Disraeli explained the character of the work he was preparing: "I shall aim rather

65. Frietzsche, "The Monstrous Clever Young Man," p.30.

66. Brandes, p.100; Roth, p.63.

at a delineation of political character than at a formal biography, and I shall confine myself to the three years during which our lost friend took a leading part."[67] It was this intention, quite strictly kept to, which makes the biography so like the trilogy, which depends so much on the delineation of political character. This is the reason that Gosse's view - "These three novels and a biography are curiously like one another in form" - is accurate.[68] The biography is almost completely factual, and makes fascinating and easy reading even today, when the issues it deals with are no longer immediate. The character of Bentinck, bluff, non-politcal, stubborn, hard-working and, above all, honest, comes out clearly: perhaps the more so because Disraeli never allows himself to intrude, referring to himself typically as "one of the protectionist party" (p.212) or "a member, who, though on the Tory benches, had been for two sessions in opposition to the ministry" (p.56).

Yet there are two occasions when Disraeli allows himself the resources of a novelist. The first is in Ch. 16, when he gives the roll of honour of the protectionists who voted with Bentinck and himself against Peel. They were

> the flower of that great party which had been so proud to follow one who had been so proud to lead them. They were men to gain whose hearts and the hearts of their fathers had been the aim and exultation of his life....[T]hey were men of honour, breeding, and refinement, high and generous character, great weight and station in the country.... [Peel] must have felt something of this, while the Manners,

67. Quoted in Clarke, p.121.

68. Gosse, p.164.

> the Somersets, the Bentincks, the Lowthers, and the Lennoxes, passed before him.... They trooped on: all the men of metal and large-acred squires... the Duncombes, the Liddells, and the Yorkes; and Devon had sent there the stout heart of Mr. Buck - and Wiltshire, the pleasant presence of Walter Long .... But the list is too long: or good names remain behind. (pp.299-300)

If this sounds very like one of his novels, it is hardly surprising. In both Coningsby and Sybil Disraeli had shown that the character and loyalty of both parliamentary party and parliamentary representatives was a matter of great concern to him. On the most important occasion of his life, when both character and loyalty seemed to have triumphed, it is not surprising that emotion and imagination supplanted bare recording.

But the second example, Chapter 24, though equally understandable, is not so excusable. Chapter 23, which deals almost entirely with other affairs ends:

> The city of London... had sent to the house of commons... a member who found a difficulty in taking one of the oaths appointed by the house to be sworn preliminarily to any member exercising his right of voting. The difficulty arose from this member being not only of the Jewish race, but unfortunately believing only in the first part of the Jewish religion. (p.481)

In that last phrase Disraeli has encapsulated one of the major arguments that constitute the following chapter, that because the Christian religion is nothing more than completed Judaism, and Jews worship the same God as Christians, Jews ought to be allowed a full part in the government of the Christian country of Great Britain. Most of the other arguments put forward

are either advanced by Eva in Tancred, or would not appear out of place coming from her lips: "in the biography the ideas expressed in 'Tancred' are in a great measure reproduced."[69] Langdon-Davies suggests that the same argument is presented in a different form in each book, when he says that "Disraeli develops in Tancred in the picturesque form of a novel the theme which he discussed historically and dogmatically in the twenty-fourth chapter of the biography of Lord George Bentinck,"[70] but in fact passages from the different books are interchangeable. However interesting these arguments may be to the readers of Tancred and its forerunners, they can have nothing to say to readers of Lord George Bentinck, since, as Disraeli cooly admits in the opening paragraph of Chapter 25, "These views however were not those which influenced Lord George Bentinck in forming his opinion that the civil disabilities of those subjects of her majesty who profess that limited belief in divine revelation which is commonly called the Jewish religion, should be removed" (p.508).

Here are opinions and attitudes whose origins can be traced back through quarter of a century, from Lord George Bentinck (in 1851) to Tancred, to The Rise of Iskander, and eventually to Alroy, begun in 1827, and which are present in a work of non-fiction as an irrelevant emotional outburst, totally out of context; just as in the works of fiction they heighten the melodrama until, at least in the case of Tancred, they destroy the book. As Brandes says, "Alroy has never altogether deserted Disraeli; it was not one of those ideas of which a poet delivers himself by carrying

69. Philipson, p.105.

70. B.N. Langdon-Davies, Introduction to Tancred, Young England Edition (London, 1904), p.xxx.

it out." [71]

71. Brandes, p.99.

Ch. 6 Addl. corrections

173, 175(2), 176, 193, 195, 196(3), 197(2), 200, 204

183. Add to note:

Subsequent quotations will be placed, where possible, in the body of the text.

PART THREE: THE CULMINATION

CHAPTER SEVEN: Lothair

Disraeli's next novel, Lothair, was not published until May 1870, when it met with considerable commercial success and almost uniformly unfavourable reviews, except for those in The Times and the Pall Mall Gazette. The twenty-three years intervening between Tancred and Lothair had been of great importance politically to Disraeli: he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer three times and Prime Minister once. He was the established leader of the Tory party and no longer needed to use fiction for propaganda, either to make his views known nationally, or to help establish his position within his own party. Whatever similarities can be discovered between this and his earlier work, then, will help to establish the continuity of his interests and to discredit the critical approach which sees his novels as merely opportunistic adjuncts to his political career. Indeed the very fact that he should choose to use his comparative leisure as Leader of the Opposition (forced on him by the seemingly impregnable position of the Liberals after the 1868 election) to write a novel at all

strengthens his claim to be regarded as a novelist as well as a politician.

On 10 October 1874 Disraeli wrote to Lady Bradford that "my works... are unlike any one else's.... [T]hey are a picture of an age when opinions on great subjects were shaken to the centre and the public mind, if not involved in anarchy, was at least in sight of it."[1] The sense of public turmoil implied in these words is present thoughout the novel. Monsignore Catesby, almost at the book's outset, tells us that "critical times are arriving" (p.33). Lady Corisande worries about "'wicked men [trying] to destroy the country'" (p.69). Lady St. Jerome is given to such statements as "'next Sunday will be remembered as a great day in English history'" (p.100), or "'We are on the eve of the greatest event of this century'" (p.339). Monsignore Catesby echoes her: "'It is one of the most important days for England that have happened in our time'" (p.116). Cardinal Grandison joins in the chorus, describing "'the eve of some mighty change... this transcendent day'" (p.346), believing that "'the time is now ripe for terminating the infidelity of the world'" (p.280) and producing the most extreme example of such crisis-laden prophecies in a cataclysmic speech:

> What the world calls civilization, as distinguished from religion, is a retrograde movement, and will ultimately lead us back to the barbarism from which we have escaped.... For every man is not only to think as he likes, but to write and to speak as he likes, and to sow with both hands broadcast where he will, errors, heresies, and blasphemies, without any authority on earth to restrain the scattering of this seed of universal desolation. (pp.199-200)

1. Zetland, I.159.

To describe the conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the secret societies as a "death-struggle" (e.g., p.258) is quite common.

While, as we have noted earlier, the method of analyzing the novels which merely consists of providing a key to the characters is of little more value than scandal-mongering, it should also be realized that when Disraeli is writing of contemporary events and offering an analysis of them, the reader's ability to identify certain fictional characters with actual people can be a useful tool. When Speare says of Theodora that she is "Italian by birth, French from inspiration, American in marriage," he is giving her revolutionary antecedents, but when Walter Sichel writes, "I am informed, through the kindness of my friend Mr. George Russell, that the original of 'Theodora' was one Madame Mario, née Jessie White," his identification confirms the contemporary, documentary aspect of the book which the reader has suspected.[2] Similarly to see Cardinal Manning in Grandison and Bishop Wilberforce in the Bishop is useful, not because it will reveal the truth about these actual people, nor because it will explain the novel's "meaning," but because it helps to provide the quasi-factual basis against which the fiction is played out.

Lothair takes place between August 1866 and August 1868, and the historical elements which produced the sense of crisis illustrated above were fear of the growing power of Roman Catholicism in England, political events in Italy, and

2. Speare, p.104; Sichel, Disraeli, p.47n.

Fenian activities in Ireland. In 1850 Pius IX had divided England into twelve territorial bishoprics. Wiseman was made Archbishop of Westminster and soon afterwards Cardinal. Not long after that a public outcry greeted the Pope's announcement that England was on the point of returning to Rome. More immediately, in 1868, amid great public interest, the third Marquess of Bute, whom Disraeli had met in 1867, became a Roman Catholic; his conversion was seen as a great success for Monsignor Capel: Catesby in the novel is clearly based on Capel; indeed, on one oocasion in the first edition, he is even called Capel.[3]

In Italy, the movement towards national unification was continuing. Originally the Papal States, and then Rome alone stood in the way. The sympathy of much of the English public centred upon the romantic figure of Garibaldi, whom Disraeli had refused to meet in 1864. During the period covered by the novel, Garibaldi was fighting the Romans and his invasion of the Papal States ended in November 1867 in his defeat at Mentana by the joint French and Papal armies; but the former were removed in 1870, the Romans held a plebiscite and subsequently the Pope lost his position as a secular ruler. To Disraeli, who had little sympathy or understanding of contemporary nationalist aspirations, much of this movement and that of the Irish activists was caused by "the machinations of secret societies.... [I]t was a delusion shared by many of his contemporaries."[4]

3. One need not, however, believe the reviewer who claimed that it was "the touch of art not meant to conceal but to reveal his artfulness by which Mr. Disraeli once [misprinted] Capel for Catesby." Dublin Review, Vol.67 (1870), p.158.

4. Vernon Bogdanor, Introduction to Lothair (London, 1975), p.xiv.

In 1856 he had warned the House of Commons about the menace of the secret societies in France and Italy, and he was still doing so in 1876 in a speech in Aylesbury. J.M. Roberts notes, "Such ideas were the common intellectual furniture of the minds of his contemporaries; this is why they provided a good focus for his novel."[5] Again Disraeli is using a recognisable historical background to strengthen the argument of his fiction.[6]

Although, with hindsight, one may want to disagree with Disraeli's understanding of the historical situation, there can I think be no doubt that he has managed to knit these diverse elements into a coherent literary whole. Just as in the trilogy the reader may reject his analysis, whether it be political, social or religious, so can one here. But equally, just as Coningsby and Sybil present a coherent and comprehensive picture of contemporary events from an assured position, however idiosyncratic that position may be, so does Lothair. Disraeli

5. J.M. Roberts, The Mythology of Secret Societies (London, 1972), p.4.

6. Although Lord George Bentinck is biography and not fiction, it has been suggested earlier that some of the ideas, notably those on race, which appeared in Tancred also occur there. If, as I shall argue, Lothair and Tancred are closely connected, it could be asked whether there are any clear connections between Lothair and Lord George Bentinck. One at least exists when Disraeli writes in the latter that "The origin of the secret societies that prevail in Europe is very remote.... In Italy they have never ceased, although they have at times beenobliged to take various forms.... [F]reemasonry was always a convenient guise.... [T]hese confederations... now cover Europe like network.... Acting in unison with a great popular movement they may destroy society." Disraeli, Lord George Bentinck, p.553. There is much more of the same; the idea of the prevalence of the secret societies was present in 1851, to be developed some nineteen years later.

here takes on the European scene with the same confidence which he had earlier applied to the English scene. Robert Blake is surely correct to describe Lothair as "the best-constructed work from his pen."[7]

The viewpoint which Disraeli applies to events is reflected by his characters. In Lothair everyone begins by having their religious position defined. As early as pages 5 and 6 we are told that Lothair had two guardians; with Disraelian symmetry one is "a Scotch noble, a Presbyterian and a Whig" and the other "a clergyman... [who] seceded from the Anglican communion, and entered the Church of Rome." Mrs. Putney Giles's "principal mission was to destroy the Papacy and to secure Italian unity" (p.20), whereas Lady St. Jermome's "whole life was dedicated to the triumph of the Catholic cause" (p.30). Even Lothair's Scottish cousins "could not stand any longer the Free Kirk, of which their austere parent was a fiery votary. It seems that they had been secretly converted to the Episcopal Church of Scotland" (p.173). All this provides the background to the major contention of the novel, that a proper understanding of the religious aspect of life must determine personal and social conduct.

Essentially the plot of the novel follows Lothair's flirtations with several different philosophies. André Maurois says that Lothair's "soul is disputed by three conflicting forces, personified in three different women - the Church of Rome, the International Revolution and the British Tradition."[8]

7. Blake, Disraeli, p.520.

8. Andre Maurois, Disraeli: A Picture of the Victorian Age, trans. Hamish Miles (London, 1927), p.237. My underlining.

Although one might want also to include Mr. Phoebus and the attractions of the "Aryan" way of life, Maurois is, I think, right to use the world "soul" for it is religion which is at the basis of all that attracts Lothair. Throughout the book, religion and society are considered together. This occurs in the conscious argument, as for example, when Lothair thinks "Atheism may be consistent with fine taste, and fine taste under certain conditions may for a time regulate a polished society; but ethics with atheism are impossible; and without ethics no human order can be strong or permanent" (p.153). More importantly, however, the two are combined in the general vocabulary of the book. Theodora, for example, the central revolutionary figure, is not infrequently described in religious terminology:

> But when... she had embarked on that perilous enterprise of personally conferring with the chiefs of those secret societies of France which had been fancifully baptised by her popular name and had nurtured her tradition as a religious faith, it might have been supposed that Lothair, left to himself, might have recurred to the earlier sentiments of his youth. But he was not left to himself. He was left with her injunctions, and the spirit of the oracle, though the divinity was no longer visible, pervaded his mind and life. (p.217)

To the Cardinal, Roman Catholicism is the only basis for a true society: "'There can be no political freedom which is not founded on Divine authority; otherwise it can be at the best but a specious phantom of license inevitably terminating in anarchy'"(p.201). For reasons which I will discuss later Disraeli never misses an opportunity to empahsize the similarity of the opposing forces.[9] So when Mirandoli the Italian revolutionary puts forward a similar opinion to that of the Cardinal one ought not to be surprised:

9. For example, the revolutionaries in London in Chapters XI and XXXII discuss the political situation in a manner very like the Catholics in Ch. L. This latter chapter ends with the news of Garibaldi's arrest and is in turn echoed in Ch. LIII when the revolutionaries in Italy discuss the arrest and the political changes it will make.

> The external life of a nation is its most important one. A nation, as an individual, had duties to fulfil appointed by God and His moral law... towards the country of countries, humanity: the outward world. I firmly believe that we fail and renounce the religious and divine element of our life whenever we betray or neglect those duties. (p.130)

But we can assume from Theodora's position (which is the most clearly defined) that the God of the revolutionaries is not the Roman Catholic nor even the Christian God. She tells Lothair that "'I cannot conceive any society of any kind without religion'" (p.79), but it becomes clear later that she is referring to natural religion:

> "I do not belong to the Roman or to the Anglican Church.... I worship in a church where I believe God dwells, and dwells for my guidance and my good: my conscience.... I have never heard from priests... any truth which my conscience had not revealed to me. They use different language from what I use, but I find after a time that we mean the same thing. What I call time they call eternity; when they describe heaven, they give a picture of earth; and beings whom they style divine they invest with all the attributes of humanity." (p.126)

Her views are a mixture of the personal and the orthodox: "'I do not myself believe in death. There is a change, and doubtless a great one, painful it may be, certainly very perplexing, but I have a profound conviction of my immortality'" (p.139); yet "'I believe in the efficacy of prayer'" (p.191).

The very events of the book lend some support to her ideas. Lothair has asked her, should she die before him, to "'promise that to me, if only once, you will reappear'" (p.139). She does, to remind him of his promise to her never to become a Roman Catholic convert and to provide the impetus which enableshim to avoid doing so. Afterwards Disraeli as narrator allows her

shade the possibility of that immortality in which she believed: "She was gone: that divine Theodora, who, let us hope, returned at least to those Elysian fields she so well deserved" (p.285), but Lothair himself has another interpretation: "He still could not resist the conviction that he had seen the form of Theodora and had listened to her voice.... But whether it were indeed the apparition of his adored friend or a distempered dream, Lothair not less recognized the warning as divine" (p.290).

It is left to Corisande to strike the patriotic note which combines the religious fervour of the Roman Catholics with the nationalism of Theodora:

> "I look upon our nobility joining the Church of Rome as the greatest calamity that has ever happened to England. Irrespective of all religious considerations, on which I will not presume to touch, it is an abnegation of patriotism; and in this age, when all things are questioned, a love of our country seems to me the one sentiment to cling to.[10] (p.181)

Walter Sichel has suggested that "What Disraeli disliked and regretted was that the choice between faith and free thought should be more and more presented as one between the Roman purple and the 'Red Republic,'"[11] and one cannot help but feel that Corisande's rather simpler interpretation of the situation is the one which the book endorses. Berwich may say, "'After all, it is the Church against the secret societies. They are the only two strong things in Europe'" (p.212); or Theodora argue, "'It is a mighty struggle; it is a struggle between the Church

10. Cf. "this age, when all things are questioned" with "An age when opinions on great subjects were shaken to the centre," quoted earlier; see n1.

11. Sichel, Disraeli, p.170.

and the secret societies; and it is a death struggle'" (p.219); the Cardinal may claim that "'if the Church were to be destroyed, Europe would be divided between the Atheist and the Communist'" (p.201); but the novel does not allow either side of this central conflict to claim the final victory.[12]

John Holloway points out that "nearly all of his novels sooner or later concentrate on that self-renewing traditionalism that he regarded as the key to the good life.... The essential line of their plots recommends their author's scheme of values."[13] The claim for supremacy from either the Roman Catholics or the revolutionaries receives no support from the main proposition of the story, which is that Lothair can resolve his religious and political doubts by remaining within the Anglican fold and by accepting his political and social duties as a responsible landowner, the traditional role which is confirmed by his engagement to Corisande.

Lothair experiences both the military demands of revolution and the spiritual demands of Roman Catholicism in Rome, and returns to England to find both experiences are meaningless in the context

12. In Endymion Lady Hainault, a comic character portrayed with affection, is descibed as a communist, and certainly she longs for a redistribution of wealth. In that book, in which the changing pattern of events is benignly accepted, her opinions hold no particular threat, whereas in Lothair both their opponents and supporters expect them to destroy contemporary society. This is another minor example of what one finds constantly in Disraeli's works: his subjects remain constant, but their treatment changes enormously from one work to another, to reflect the immediate theme.

13. Holloway, pp.108-9.

of his future life. When he becomes aware of the publicity given to his supposed "conversion," he thinks,"Whatever happened he could never return to England, at least for many years, when all the things and persons he cared for would have disappeared.... He would go to America, or Australia, or the Indian Ocean, or the interior of Africa" (p.277). Yet he must return, and Disraeli lets him down gently, but humorously:

> He had not the courage to go into White's. He was under a vague impression that the whole population of the metropolis, and especially those who reside in the sacred land bounded on the one side by Piccadilly and on the other by Pall Mall, were unceasingly talking of his scrapes and misadventures.... Nobody seemed aware that he had been long and unusually absent from them. Some had themselves not come up to town till after Easter, and had therefore less cause to miss him. The great majority, however, were so engrossed with themselves that they never missed anybody. (pp.330-1)

Even the "noble and greyheaded patron of the arts in Great Britain" knows nothing of his trip to Italy, but only of his journey to Jerusalem, remarking with ironic effect,"'You can keep Italy for a later and calmer day'" (p.331). He continues in the same vein later, "'Some day when you have leisure and inclination, and visit Italy, you will see portraits by Titian and Raffaelle and others'" (p.340), unaware, of course, that Lothair had had a Raphael Virgin by his bedside during his convalescence.

Lothair was often regarded as an attack on the Roman Catholic Church, but in fact it is essentially good-natured.[14]

14. A point strongly made by David E. Painting in "Disraeli and the Roman Catholic Church," Quarterly Review, Vol.304 (1966), pp.17-25. One need not accept Painting's view that the hero's name is an amalgam of Lothario and Martin Luther.

As R.W. Stewart remarks, "The cases for Rome and the societies are presented in a surprisingly sympathetic light."[15] One might instance that on the one hand, Theodora, the arch-revolutionary, is the single most attractive figure, and on the other, that the novel is dedicated to the Duc d'Aumele, himself a Catholic. Perhaps the principal reason for this good-natured sympathy can be found in the fact that neither of these two main forces is ultimately seen as really dangerous. If one looks again at the portents of crisis and disaster quoted above, one must accept that fun is being poked at the speakers. The humour in Lady St. Jerome's positive dating of "'next Sunday'" (p.100) as a great day in English history is typical. In Lady Corisande's case Disraeli makes the point even more clear. After her remark, "'But when wicked men try to destroy the country, then I like my family to be in the front'" (p.69), he comments on her exaggeration: "The destruction of the country meditated this night by wicked men was some change in the status of the Church of England" (p.70). The "opinions on great subjects [may have been] shaken to the centre" in certain circles, but English history and tradition, for which Disraeli always had so much respect, are seen as adequate to provide the necessary bulwark against any revolution.[16] When Speare calls Lothair

15. Stewart, Disraeli's Novels Reviewed, p.246.

16. Compare this, for example, with Lyle's remark in Coningsby: "'I enter life in the midst of the convulsion in which the very principles of our political and social systems are called in question. I cannot unite myself with the party of destruction'" (p.146), in which a similar sentiment is taken seriously and immediately put in a political context. Or with Tancred, where "our agitated age, when the principles of all institutions, sacred and secular, have been called in question" is immediately put into a spiritual context: "both the doctrine and the discipline of the Church have been impugned" (p.71). The humour which is part of Lothair's argument that all excesses are unnecessary, and that English traditions provide an adequate creed, is missing in both cases.

"a political novel... without a political purpose,"[17] he may be referring to the presence of this more general approach, which exists here without the more explicit political attitudes of Coningsby or Sybil, and which becomes even more evident in Endymion.

It is respect for English history and tradition which Lothair himself has to learn. The weakness of all Disraeli's heroes is almost charming in Lothair's case, as a portrait of a naïve adolescent.[18] The manner in which the older characters treat Lothair as raw material is quite clear. The University don is one of the few failures in this respect: "This eminent personage had already let Lothair slip from his influence. But the Bishop..." (p.165). We have seen in the opening chapter that as the heroes become weaker in Disraeli's novels, the women become stronger and take on the role of educators. After Sybil and Eva comes Theodora to continue the pattern. Lothair realizes that with her "his mind had considerably opened" (p.151), his guests are called "the scholars of Theodora" (p.185), he tells her that without her friendship, "'I should have remained... a prejudiced, narrow-minded being, with contracted sympathies and false knowledge, wasting my life on obsolete trifles'" (p.207), and Mr. Phoebus confirms the educational tone when he says, "'The conversation of a woman like Theodora is worth all the libraries in the world'" (p.308).

In his naïveté, Lothair wants to avoid his social

17. Speare, p.102.

18. Susanne Howe recognizes a trace of Disraeli's earlier techniques when she claims that he "certainly modeled.... Lothair more or less consciously on the apprenticeship pattern." Howe, p.182.

responsibilities. Disraeli gently deflates his certainty:

> "I have no wish to enter the world," said Lothair, with much decision.... "I hate society.... I have seen quite enough of it.... I went to an evening party last season.... [M]y opinions are already formed on every subject; that is to say, every subject of importance; and, what is more, they will never change." (pp.13-14)

When, later on, Lothair really is beginning to interest himself in the world and "subjectsof importance," Disraeli minimises the nature of his involvement, writing of "the serious subjects round which he was always fluttering" (p.137). Even his actual military involvement comes indirectly: "He went forth to struggle for a cause which at least she believed to be just and sublime; and if his own convictions on that head might be less assured or precise, still there was doubtless much that was inspiring in the contest" (p.281). Almost immediately after this, Lothair's involvement with the Roman Catholic Church is described as equally lacking personal volition: "he was spell-bound, as much as any knight in fairy tale whom malignant influences had robbed of his valour and will and virtue" (p.281). These two demands on his soul seem at the time to be total: "And if there was no Theodora on earth, why should one think of anything but heaven?" (p.249).

In Ch. LXXI Lothair has the leisure to consider his development, and how far he has come from his earlier beliefs:

> He wanted to ascertain the causes of what he deemed the failure of his life.... Were these causes to be found... in the general inexperience and incompetence of youth?... Lothair now felt that he had started in life with an extravagant appreciation of the influence of the religious principle on the conduct of human affairs.... All the world could not retire to Mount

> Athos. It was clear, therefore, that there was a juster conception of the relations between religion and life than that which he had at first adopted.
> Practically, Theodora had led or was leading him to this result; but Theodora, though religious, did not bow before those altars to which he for a moment had never been faithless. (p.289)

The next stage in Lothair's education comes from Madame Phoebus and her sister Euphrosyne: "They had, too, a great love and knowledge both of art and nature, and insensibly they weaned Lothair from that habit of introspection which, though natural to him, he had too much indulged, and taught him to find sources of interest and delight in external objects" (p.299).

The final stage is, of course, brought about by the character Paraclete. At the beginning of Ch. XVIII Lothair is considering the present state of his religious beliefs: "There must be truth on earth now as fresh and complete as it was at Bethlehem. And how could it be preserved but by the influence of the Paraclete acting on an ordained class?" (p.58). This last remark seems almost to predict the relationship of Lothair and Paraclete when they do meet. Speare writes that Paraclete is"borrowed bodily from Pilgrim's Progress (where, it will be recalled, he is the Interpreter)... [But he] is, in truth, a transformed Sidonia."[19] This view is echoed by Vernon Bogdanor: "the dialogue with Paraclete is crucial to Lothair's development .... Paraclete plays the same role in Lothair as Sidonia in Coningsby."[20] While it is true that Paraclete is in the tradition of Sidonia, he is not in direct line, but arrives via the Angel of Arabia in Tancred. The spiritual side of his character has thus become more important, but what Paraclete teaches Lothair will come as no surprise to readers of other Disraeli novels. Of Galilee: "'the spiritual nature of man is developed in this

19. Speare, pp.168-9.

20. Bogdanor, note to Lothair, pp.385-6.

land'" (p.314). Of belief: "'I know that I have a soul, and I believe that it is immortal'" (p.314). He refutes the merely scientific:

> "Science may prove the insignificance of this globe in the scale of creation... but it cannot prove the insignificance of man.... There must be design, or all we see would be without sense, and I do not believe in the unmeaning. As for the natural forces to which all creation is now attributed, we know they are unconscious, while consciousness is as inevitable a portion of our existence as the eye or the hand. The conscious cannot be derived from the unconscious. Man is divine'" (pp314-5)

He believes in a personal God rather than "'Councils... confused assemblies first got together by the Greeks, and then by barbarous nations in barbarous times'" (p.316). And, of course, he believes in Race: "'God works by races, and one was appointed in due season and after many developments to reveal and expound in this land the spiritual nature of man'" (p.316). Though we are told that subsequently "Lothair passed his life chiefly with Paraclete, and a few weeks after this first acquaintance, they left Jerusalem together for Galilee" (p.318), the conversation quoted above is the only one given in full, and it covers all the points on which Lothair needs guidance. Not only does Paraclete confirm Lothair's belief in Christianity - "'I am content to dwell in Galilee and trace the footsteps of my divine Master; musing over His life and pregnant sayings'" (p.317) - in which Theodora had been unable to help him, but he suggests that the questioning which had tortured Lothair previously might be natural: "'Why we are here, whence we come, whither we go, these are questions which man is organically framed and forced to ask himself'" (p.316). If his teachings are not Theodora's, neither are

they the same as the Catholics', as his remarks on Councils make clear. But there is one further force in the book which Paraclete is able to put in its proper place, a force which might be called "nature." Before we can see how he treats this phenomenon, it will be necessary to trace its presence throughout the novel and see of what it consists.

As with the other concepts central to this novel, nature is not introduced in a haphazard or violent manner. The book abounds in natural descriptions, where the scenery is considered as a natural force, and like religion, is seen in terms of its relationship to society:

> The open country extending from the Apennines to the very gates of Rome, and which they had now to cross, was in general a desert; a plain clothed with a coarse vegetation, and undulating with an interminable series of low and uncouth mounds, without any of the grace of form which always attends the disposition of nature. Nature had not created them. They were the offspring of man and time, and of their rival powers of destruction. Ages of civilization were engulfed in this drear expanse. They were the tombs of empires and the sepulchres of contending races. The Campagna proper has at least the grace of aqueducts to break its monotony, and everywhere the cerulean spell of distance; but in this grim solitude antiquity has left only the memory of its violence and crimes, and nothing is beautiful except the sky. (p.227)

As always, Disraeli has to include London in his characteristic mode of description. In the following passage religion and nature are almost equally present:

> And the Hansom drove on, through endless boulevards, some bustling, some dingy, some tawdry and flaring, some melancholy and mean; rows of garden gods, planted on the walls of yards full of vases and divinities of concrete, hugh railway halls, monster hotels, dissenting chapels in the form of Gothic churches, quaint ancient almshouses that were once built in the fields, and tea-gardens and stingo houses and knackers' yards. (p.87)

The chain of images becomes more precise when related to the country houses, which are so important in Disraeli's novels. They are not merely reflections of the inhabitants' values, as they were, say, in Coningsby, but they are constantly described in terms of the surrounding countryside. After a description of its interior, Brentham is put in its park:

> [there] spread a gardened domain of considerable extent, bright with flowers, dim with coverts of rare shrubs, and musical with fountains. Its limit reached a park, with timber such as the midland counties only can produce. The fallow deer trooped among its ferny solitudes and gigantic oaks; but beyond the waters of the broad and winding lake the scene became more savage, and the eye caught the dark form of the red deer on some jutting mount. (p.5)

It is the garden, rather than the park, which becomes significant later on. The garden is part of a continuing tradition, and it is specifically connected with Corisande:

> In the pleasure-grounds of Brentham were the remains of an ancient garden of the ancient house that had long ago been pulled down. When the modern pleasure-grounds were planned and created, notwithstanding the protests of the artists in landscapes, the father of the present Duke would not allow this ancient garden to be entirely destroyed, and you came upon its quaint appearance in the dissimilar world in which it was placed, as you might in some festival of romantic costume upon a person habited in the courtly dress of the last century.... The Duke had given this garden to Lady Corisande, in order that she might practise her theory, that flower-gardens should be sweet and luxuriant, and not hard and scentless imitations of works of art. Here, in their season, flourished abundantly all those productions of nature which are now banished from our once delighted senses: huge bushes of honeysuckle, and bowers of sweet-pea and sweetbriar and jessamine clustering over the walls, and gillyflowers scenting with their sweet breath the ancient bricks from which they seemed to spring. There were banks of violets which the southern breeze always stirred, and mignonette filled every vacant nook. As they entered now, it seemed a blaze of roses and carnations, though one recognized in a moment the presence of the lily, the heliotrope, and the stock. (pp.369-70)

The intensity of the prose, its very luxuriance, reveals how important the image of the garden is in this work. In A Vindication of the English Constitution (1835), Disraeli had written that Englishmen have

> looked upon the nation as a family and upon the country as a landed inheritance. Generation after generation were to succeed to it, with all its convenient buildings, and all its choice cultivations, its parks and gardens, as well as its fields and meads, its libraries and its collection of art, all its wealth, but all its incumberance.[21]

The continuity of care regarded with such respect above is the same virtue which Corisande, her father and her grandfather have shown in their care of Brentham. Holloway writes that Disraeli had a respect for "traditional continuity" which "is not one of unvarying institutions, or a rigid and immutable class hierarchy. It is a tradition of energy, insight and adaptability and its aristocratic or patriarchal virtues could find expression in new forms... as easily as in old," and the description of Corisande's garden amply proves his point.[22] It is, of course, here that she gives Lothair a rose, symbol of England, to seal their engagement.

The interior of Vauxe is described and then, "Vauxe stood in a large park studded with stately trees; here and there an avenue of Spanish chestnuts or a grove of oaks; sometimes a gorsy dell and sometimes a great spread of antlered fern, taller than the tallest man" (p.45). Yet, as befits a house

21. Whigs and Whiggism: Political Writings of Benjamin Disraeli, ed. William Hutcheson (London, 1913), p.124.

22. Holloway, p.94.

whose inhabitants have put themselves under allegiance to Rome, Vauxe is constantly described in terms both of antiquity and control:

> "'tis a curious place, and was planted only seventy years ago by my Lord's grandfather, entirely with spruce firs, but with so much care and skill.... It was a forest of firs, but quite unlike such as might be met with in the north of Europe or of America. Every tree was perfect, huge and complete, and full of massy grace. Nothing else was permitted to grow there." (p.50)

As Lothair remarks, "'This seems a grove where one might worship'" (p.50). The Cardinal extends the notion that control is as necessary in agriculture as in religion soon afterwards. When walking with Lothair among "the huge trees" (p.54) Grandison recommends him "to read Evelyn's 'Sylva.' Mr. Evelyn had a most accomplished mind; indeed a character in every respect that approached perfection. He was also a most religious man" (p.55). Unlike Corisande who in her garden is capable of making a modern interpretation of English traditions, the Catholic Lady St. Jerome is entirely in the hands of her gardener:

> The gardener, like all head-gardeners, was opinionated. Living always at Vauxe, he had come to believe that the gardens belonged to him, and that the family were only occasional visitors; and he treated them accordingly. The lively and impetuous Lady St. Jerome had a thousand bright fancies, but her morose attendant rarely indulged them. (p.45)

Significantly, "The only way that Lady St. Jerome could manage Hawkins was through Father Coleman. Father Coleman, who knew everything, knew a great deal about gardens; from the days of Le Notre to those of the fine gentlemen who now travel about, and when disengaged deign to give us advice" (pp.45-6). Like

the Cardinal, Father Coleman has a reference to earlier, written authority; yet "'You find us in a garden without flowers,' said Lady St. Jerome" (p.46).

Muriel Towers, Lothair's ancestral seat, is, like its owner, both romantic and given to extremes:

> MURIEL TOWERS crowned a wooded steep, part of a wild and winding and sylvan valley at the bottom of which rushed a foaming stream. On the other side of the castle the scene, though extensive, was not less striking, and was essentially romantic. A vast park spread in all directions beyond the limit of the eye, and with much variety of character, ornate near the mansion, and choicely timbered; in other parts glens and spreading dells, masses of black pines and savage woods; everywhere, sometimes glittering and sometimes sullen, glimpses of the largest natural lake that inland England boasts, MURIEL MERE, and in the exteme distance moors, and the first crest of mountains. The park, too, was full of life, for there were not only herds of red and fallow deer, but, in its more secret haunts, wandered a race of wild cattle, extremely savage, white and dove-coloured, and said to be of the time of the Romans. (pp.146-7)

If Lothair's tendency to wild enthusiasms is reflected in the scenery, his over-indulgence in religious thought lies behind the humour of the following:

> After luncheon they visited the gardens, which had been formed in a sylvan valley enclosed with gilded gates. The creator of this paradise had been favoured by nature, and had availed himself of this opportunity. The contrast between the parterres blazing with colour and the sylvan background, the undulating paths over romantic heights, the fanes and the fountains, the glittering statues, and the Babylonian terraces, formed a whole much of which was beautiful, and all of which was striking and singular.
>
> "Perhaps too many temples," said Lothair, "but this ancestor of mine had some imagination." (pp.157-8)

Even the conflict in Lothair's mind is represented within his park:

> He arrived at mighty gates of wondrous workmanship, that once had been the boast of a celebrated convent

> on the Danube, but which, in the days of revolutions, had reached England, and had been obtained by the grandfather of Lothair to guard the choice demesne that was the vicinage of his castle. (p.148)

If his castle and his duties as a landlord are to become his future, Lothair will have to keep equal distance between the convent and the revolution. In Jerusalem Lothair had been advised about his duties, and now, "He thought of the General, and what his old commander had said at their last interview, reminding him of his fine castle, and expressing his conviction that the lord of such a domain must have much to do.... 'I will go down to Muriel tomorrow'" (p.365). One can only presume that he will carry out what he had envisaged earlier: "'If the working classes were properly lodged, at their present rate of wages, they would be richer. They would be healthier and happier at the same cost.... I shall build 2,000 cottages on my estates. I have the designs all ready'" (p.14). It is a scheme reminiscent of much of Sybil.

Maitre remarks, "Brentham, Vauxe et Belmont symbolisent pour Lothair, les trois forces spirituelles qui tour à tour s'imposent à son esprit."[23] This can signify the houses as well as their inhabitants, as Lothair makes clear:

> His memory, long in a state of apathy, or curbed and controlled into indifference, seemed endowed with unnatural vitality, reproducing the history of his past life in rapid and exhausting tumult. All its scenes rose before him, Brentham, and Vauxe, and Muriel, and closing with one absorbing spot, which, for a long time, it avoided, and in which all merged and ended, Belmont. (p.255)

Theodora, the inhabitant of Belmont, also makes her own

23. Maitre, p.349.

opinions clear through comments on gardens. She and Lothair are walking in

> the private gardens at Blenheim.... "I do not feel altogether content in these fine gardens. The principle of exclusion on which they are all founded is to me depressing. I require in all things sympathy.... Even your parks, which all the world praises, do not quite satisfy me. I prefer a forest where all may go, even the wild beasts.... I cannot bring myself to believe that they had gravel walks in the garden of Eden." (pp.80-2)

And here we have the combination of nature with a religious overtone to reflect Theodora's values.

Nature is frequently allied to the classical times and religions. Theodora's face is first described as being "pale, but perfectly Attic in outline, with the short upper lip and the round chin, and a profusion of dark chestnut hair bound by a Grecian fillet" (p.28), and later "the countenance was Olympian: a Phidian face, with large grey eyes and dark lashes; wonderful hair, abounding without art, and gathered together by Grecian fillets" (p.79). The Princess of Tivoli, who herself lives in a palace "full of the pale statues of Grecian gods and goddesses" (p.272), says, "'my pilgrimage is to Theodora. I must come and worship her once a year'" (p.121); later she becomes more specific: "'There are moments when I sometimes think she is one of those beautiful divinities that we once worshipped in this land'" (p.231-2). Nor is she alone in this reaction. When Theodora visits the revolutionaries about to march to Rome, "the men of the Gulf... fell down on their knees and kissed the hem of her garment; the Scaramouch forgot his tricks, and

wept as he would to the Madonna" (p.236).

Significantly, it is Theodora who urges the use of the most secret and most powerful of the revolutionary societies, Madre Natura, and so brings together nationalism, revolution, nature and religion:[24]

> The"MADRE NATURA" is the oldest, the most powerful, and the most occult of the secret societies in Italy. Its mythic origin reaches the era of paganism, and it is not impossible that it may have been founded by some of the despoiled professors of the ancient faith.... Their inward purpose was... to secure the restoration, of the Roman republic, and to expel from the Aryan settlement of Romulus the creeds and sovereignity of what they styled the Semitic invasion.... The chief tenent of THE SOCIETY OF "MADRE NATURA" is denoted by its name. They could conceive nothing more benignant and more beautiful, more provident and more powerful, more essentially divine, than that system of creative order to which they owed their being.... [T]hey desired to revive those exquisite personifications of the abounding qualities of the mighty mother which the Aryan genius had bequeathed to the admiration of man. Parthenope was again to rule at Naples... and starveling saints and winking madonnas were to restore their usurped altars to the god of the silver bow and the radiant daughter of the foaming wave.[25] (pp.223-4)

Theodora continues to involve the Madre Natura in that struggle which was

> to extirpate all signs and memories of Mediaeval and Semitic Rome, and restore and renovate the inheritance of the true offspring of the she-wolf. The very aspect of the place itself was sinister. Whether it were the dulness of the dark sky, or the frown of MADRE NATURA herself, but the old Seven Hills seemed to look askance. The haughty Capitol, impatient of its chapels, sighed once more for triumphs; and the proud Palatine, remembering the Caesars, glanced with

24. In another minor example, one should note that the Fenian meeting in London which Lothair attends is "held under the sham banners of St. Joseph and harangued by a mock priest" (Sichel, Disraeli, p.255) and reflects in miniature the same national, political and religious mixture as the Roman conspiracy.

25. For Aryan here, read Graeco-Roman (Pagan); for Semitic read (Judaeo)-Christian. It was Disraeli's view of the conclusion of Judaism in Christianity which made this interpretation available to him.

> imperial contempt on the palaces of the Papal princelings that, in the course of ignominious ages, had been constructed out of the exhaustless womb of its still sovereign ruin. (p.244)

She puts natural objects to use as messages:

> a young soldier... pressing to his lips a branch of the olive tree, presented it to her. On another occasion when she returned to her tent, she found a bunch of fruit from the same tree, though not quite ripe, which showed that the cause of peace had not only progressed but had almost matured. All these communications sustained her sanguine disposition. (p.234)

While the force of nature has its religious aspect embodied in Madre Natura, the Roman Catholic Church in turn is shown to use "Aryan" beauty for its own purposes. The Raphael Madonna which Lothair is shown by the Monsignore, and which remains on his bedside table is "one of those faces of Greek beauty which the great painter not infrequently caught up at Rome" (p.251). The Church to which Lothair is taken almost immediately after admiring the picture is described as having "been raised during the latter half of the sixteenth century by Vignola, when, under the influence of the great Pagan revival, the Christian Church began to assume the character of an Olympian temple" (p.252).

Throughout Lothair, Disraeli is at pains to show the inter-relation of the forces with which he is dealing, because in that way he can minimise their claims to exclusivity. The revolutionary societies no less than the Roman Catholic Church have their religious aspects, religion is discussed in terms of the society it produces, society is reflected in the uses to which nature is put, the natural world is seen as being the basis of the

classical religions. Each of these forces also has its spokesman, and for nature there is the classical "Aryan," Mr. Phoebus. He is first introduced when his statue, the Genius of Freedom, for which Theodora was the model, is being placed on its "pedestal in the temple" at Belmont (p.105). The principles on which he bases his art are

> "ARYAN principles... not merely the study of nature, but of beautiful nature; the art of design in a country inhabited by a firstrate race, and where the laws, the manners, the customs, are calculated to maintain the health and beauty of a firstrate race. In a greater or less degree, these conditions obtained from the age of Pericles to the age of Hadrian in pure Aryan communities, but Semitism began then to prevail, and ultimately triumphed. Semitism has destroyed art; it taught man to despise his own body, and the essence of art is honour the human frame." (p.106)

Mr. Phoebus literally and metaphorically completes Lothair's escape from the protective custody of Monsignore Catesby and Father Coleman in his yacht, significantly named the Pan, and takes him to the Aegean isle which reflects his beliefs as much as the country houses and their parks do those of Lothair's English friends. It is here that his wife and sister-in-law advance Lothair's education by showing him that the enjoyment of the natural things of life is accessible to all:"'Welcome to an Aryan clime, an Aryan landscape, and an Aryan race. It will do you good after your Semitic hallucinations'"(pp.295-6).[26] The natives of the island "'have, in fact, been performing unconsciously the religious ceremonies

26. Another small instance of Disraeli stressing the similarity between the contending forces. The Cardinal suggested earlier that Lothair's belief that he was fighting on the side of the rebels at Mentana was an "hallucination" (p.278).

of their ancestors... which they pursue, and will for ever, though they may have forgotten the name of the dryad or the nymph who presides over their waters'" (p.297). Almost the last act that Mr. Phoebus and Lothair perform, before they travel on to Jerusalem, is to visit the grove of Daphne:

> " It is a real laurel grove... [where I] expect some fine summer night... to hear a voice of music on the mountains declaring that the god Pan has returned to earth".... They entered the sacred circle and beheld a statue raised on a porphyry pedestal. The light fell with magical effect on the face of the statue. It was the statue of Theodora, the placing of which in the pavilion of Belmont Mr. Phoebus was superintending when Lothair first made his acquaintance. (pp.302-3)

But like the Roman Catholics and Theodora, so too the excesses of Mr. Phoebus's position must be exposed and Paraclete, as we saw earlier, is the person on whom the duty falls. In their first exchange, Mr. Phoebus claims that "the triumph of the Hellenes was the triumph of the beautiful, and all that is great and good in life was owing to their victory," and Paraclete replies that "'For my part I could not maintain that the Hellenic system led to virtue'" (p.311). When Lothair has his crucial discussion with Paraclete, Mr. Phoebus's opinions are criticised along with those of Lothair's other "temptations":

> "The answer to Mr. Phoebus is, that his system has been tried and has failed, and under conditions more favourable than are likely to exist again; the worship of nature ended in the degradation of the human race.... His school never care to pursue any investigation which cannot be followed by the eye, and the worship of the beautiful always ends in an orgy. As for Pantheism, it is Atheism in domino." (p.315)

At one point, after he has first been introduced to the differing concepts of religion, Lothair in frustration

"consigned to oblivion the rival churches of Christendom, the Aryan race, and the genius of Semitism" (p.133). But what he comes to realize as the book progresses is that it is not the religions in themselves, but their rivalry which is wrong, and that includes the "Aryan" worship of beauty as much as religion or republicanism. As I have tried to show, Disraeli refuses to describe any of these central forces of the novel as exclusive, and the moderate way--which embraces Anglicanism not Roman Catholicism, being a responsible landlord not a republican, cultivating a garden not totally committing oneself to the love of nature--is how Lothair will survive.

It follows from the argument above that in many ways Lothair is what Tancred set out to be. This time we have indeed a book which discusses the place of religion in society. The most significant difference is that Paraclete, whose very name puts him in the same category as the Angel of Arabia from Tancred, meets Lothair for their crucial discussion on the Mount of Olives, rather than Sinai. In other words, the focus of this novel is the relevance of the New Testament, not the Old. The corollary of this is that race is of much less importance in Lothair. Although both Mr. Phoebus and Theodora comment on the need for racial purity, and though "Semitic" and "Aryan" are part of the vocabulary of the novel, race is not a central concept, but is seen as a adjunct to religion. Though, like Tancred, Lothair in its later stages leans heavily on Disraeli's Eastern tour of 1830-1, here again the difference is that the relevance of the Eastern experiences (indeed all Lothair's experiences) are tested by returning the hero to

England - something impossible for Tancred to do. Lothair can return because what he has learnt has fitted him the more for the role he has to play. The manner in which he learns is, fittingly, less exotic. The simplest illustration of this lies in the fact that in Tancred an actual angel appears, whereas in Lothair the question of whether there has been a divine visitation or not is not only central to the book's theme, but openly discussed within it.

One can be even more precise in connecting the two novels - indeed in Chapter XXX in the manuscript, Disraeli wrote "Tancred" instead of "Lothair." Lothair, like Tancred, contains the hero's coming-of-age celebrations, but whereas in the latter the hero is the only one to feel their religious significance, in Lothair everyone is alert to it, and indeed most are manoeuvering that their own sect should appear the most prominent at them. Lothair's Presbyterian guardian takes the opportunity to warn him against Catholic domination, the day itself begins with an Anglican service, and at the actual ceremonies Lothair is presented with a bible and a prayer-book. The omnipresence of religion in Lothair has been remarked upon earlier and it plays a major part in the book's coherence.

Lothair's meeting with Theodora occurs when he offers her and her husband the use of his carriage after theirs has had an accident: "'I have a carriage waiting for me at this moment.... It is at your service'" (p.76). Tancred had met Lady Bertie and Bellairs in a similar manner, but in London,

not Oxford: "'I have a carriage at hand... and it is quite at your service'" (p.117). In Roman society Lothair's position in England is discussed by "two young Roman princes, members of the Guardia Nobile.... 'The English here say... that he is their richest man.' 'And very noble, too,' said the other. 'Certainly, truly noble; a kind of cousin of the Queen'" (p.272). Tancred had, previously, been discussed in the divan: "'As far as I can make out... it is a brother of the Queen of England'.... 'There is no fear of his spending all his money....He is an English lord... and one of the greatest'" (pp.176-7).

There are other significant echoes:

> Jerusalem by moonlight! 'Tis a fine spectacle, apart from all its indissoluble associations of awe and beauty.... The all-pervading stillness is broken by a breeze.... It wails among the tombs, and sighs among the cypress groves. The palm-tree trembles as it passes, as if it were a spirit of woe.... [I]s it the haunting voice of prophets mourning over the city that they could not save? (p.168)

This description comes from the more melodramatic Tancred, whereas in Lothair we read "Time, which changes everything, is changing even the traditionary appearance of forlorn Jerusalem. Not that its mien after all, was ever very sad" (p.305), and "There are few things finer than the morning view of Jerusalem.... The fresh and golden light falls on a walled city with turrets and towers and frequent gates" (p.312). In Tancred it is the narrator who says that "we must no longer presume to call Europe by its beautiful oriental name of Christendom" (p.360). Narrative support is thus given to the divorce between contemporary Europe and its religious roots. In Lothair, however, the remark that "the change of name from Christendom to Europe had proved a failure and a disastrous one" (p.100) is given to Lady St. Jerome

whose penchant for crisis-laden pronouncements is consistently mocked.

The more positive approach of Lothair may reflect the more viable argument presented by the book; some of the jokes are, however, almost identical. On being told that Tancred is going to Jerusalem, Mr. Ormsby enquires,

> "What can he find to do at Jerusalem?" "What, indeed," said Lord Milford. "My brother was there in '39; he got leave after the bombardment of Acre, and he says there is absolutely no sport of any kind." "There used to be partridges in the time of Jeremiah," said Mr. Ormsby; "at least they told us so at the Chapel Royal last Sunday." (p.85)

Lothair tells Lord Carisbrooke that he has returned from Jerusalem with St. Aldegonde and Betram: "'What on earth could they go to Jerusalem for?' said Lord Carisbrooke. 'I am told there is no sort of sport there. They say, in the Upper Nile, there is good shooting.' 'St Aldegonde was disappointed. I suppose our countrymen have disturbed the crocodiles and frightened away the pelicans?'" (p.331). The significance of these two episodes lies in their position in each novel. In Tancred they occur before the hero's journey; his religious isolation from his peers is emphasized by the joke, nor does he take part in the conversation. In Lothair the hero is himself able to answer the query quite seriously. He has returned to England without the excesses of commitment he once had, to join the fellowship of such men as Lord Carisbrooke.

One further aspect of the connection between the two novels ought to be noted. In Tancred, to quote Brandes, "the race of Ansarey, with its beautiful queen, represents Hellenic worship

of beauty, as Phoebus does in Lothair."[27] I think this is clearly true, but there are two further points which Brandes does not mention. Firstly Mr. Phoebus is of the contemporary world (he is probably based on Lord Leighton [1834-96] who emphasized "Aryan" achievements in art), and so, however idiosyncratic his opinions, they are seen to exist in the nineteenth century, and in England. The Ansarey, however, remain out of context, a religious throw-back, isolated in their mountain fastness, and nothing from their culture is capable of being translated by Tancred into English life. Lothair's return to England is facilitated by the fact that his "temptations" are of the modern world, just as Tancred's return is made impossible by the fact that his are not. Secondly, it is not only Mr. Phoebus who has connections with the Ansarey but the importance of classical ideas, both of religion and beauty, exists in other parts of the novel, Madre Natura, for example. The cohesiveness of Lothair should not be under-estimated.

In Lothair the sense of crisis considered earlier is illustrated by the equal status of three major events for their participants. Lothair has his coming-of-age, the Roman Catholics have the "miracle" of Lothair's rescue, and the revolutionaries the liberation of Rome. These last two succeed in giving Rome itself a central position in the novel. Blake provides a historical viewpoint: "The struggle between Romanism and revolutionary nationalism for Lothair mirrors the great European struggle for Rome itself"; while Froude puts it on a more

27. Brandes, p.221.

personal level: "thoughts are concentrated on the delivery of Rome from the Papacy. Thus simultaneously the two enthusiasms were concentrated on the same spot. The Catholic Devotees were dreaming of the reunion of Christendom."[28] The connection also exists in the very description of the city. The first time that Lothair is allowed out after his illness, the scene is described thus: "Below and before them, on an undulating site, a city of palaces and churches spread out its august form, enclosing within its ample walls sometimes a wilderness of classic ruins, column and arch and theatre, sometimes the umbrageous spread of princely gardens" (p.254). Notice the inclusion of sites of secular and religious rule, references to the past and to nature. Later Lothair can be more precise as to the city's component parts: "He sat down on a block of stone... and asked himself [what was] the secret spell of this Rome.... [S]till it was Rome: Republican or Caesarian, papal or pagan, it still was Rome" (p.284).

The centrality of Rome to the book is reflected by the fact that Theodora leads Lothair there in her campaign and Clare Arundel actually summons him to meet her there. However, as I have mentioned earlier, Lothair's return to England marks the maturity of his development; interestingly enough, all those other characters who at one time or another represent possible futures for Lothair also reflect the movement from Rome. Mr. Phoebus, having dared the Semitic influence of Jerusalem, is off to face the barbarities of Russia; Theodora dies before she

28. Blake, Disraeli, p.517; Froude, pp.222-3.

reaches Rome, and her statue is placed in a sacred grove on an Aegean island; Clare Arundel, who has also left the world by entering a convent, is like Theodora in that she is last seen represented by a portrait in the Academy. Corisande, who had neither the need to lead nor to summon, but merely to wait until Lothair realized the importance of traditional virtues, is seen in a garden in England. Both Theodora and Clare Arundel reveal their weakness by their original connection with Rome, which represents all the things which Lothair will ultimately discard, and by their final appearance only through artistic representations. Corisande shows her strength in her continuing presence in England.

Rome is the site of both Theodora's and Clare Arundel's "miracles," which Corisande, who comes into her own at the more mature and, for Disraeli, mundane conclusion to the book, does not need. Lothair had asked Theodora to reappear to him after her death, though she is doubtful whether this is possible. When she does, it is to remind him of his promise never to become a member of a church, the Roman Catholic, which believes in miracles. To say of the event that "Disraeli was partial to visions as a melodramatic resource"[29] is to underestimate the importance of the contrast between it and Clare Arundel's "miracle," which is dealt with in more detail and is dealt with twice.

Lothair, fighting with the Republicans, is wounded at the Battle of Mentana, carried to Rome unconscious, and, as a compatriot, is brought to the attention of Clare Arundel who is

29. Monypenny and Buckle, II.494.

nursing the wounded. Subsequently the woman who told Clare Arundel where he was to be found cannot be discovered. That is how matters stand at the end of Chapter LX. On his recovery, Lothair cannot discover the reason for the extraordinary treatment he is receiving in Roman society until he reads, in Chapter LXVII, a Roman newspaper which describes, to his horror, the religious ceremony at which he had been present the previous day. The ceremony, he now discovers, had been to celebrate "the greatest event of this century" (p.273),[30] to wit, the intervention of the Virgin Mary, who had personally taken Clare Arundel to Lothair on his return from the Battle of Mentana, where he had been wounded, fighting on the Roman side! Additional evidence is then adduced to "prove" the miracle. A comparison between this and the later appearance of Theodora can be made by the reader, and of course Lothair, on nearly every important point, to the detriment of the Catholic "miracle." Where Theodora disbelieves, Clare Arundel believes (despite the obvious falsehood of some of the claims). Lothair who suspects that Theodora's "miracle" may not be genuine, knows that parts of this one cannot be, and instead of decent "privacy" here the affair has been subject to the worst kind of publicity. Again excess is held up to ridicule.

The ridicule is achieved first through the comparison with Theodora's miracle, secondly through comparison between the actual verifiable events and the newspaper story, and thirdly

30. Notice again the prevalence of these extravagant claims and how they are made fun of.

through the additional version we get in "the scene in which he [Cardinal Grandison] explains to Lothair why he must not rely on his own memory of what happened, [which] is one of the best pieces of comedy Disraeli ever wrote."[31] Sheila M. Smith recognizes the importance of the interview, calling it "the novel's central scene" and accurately describing it as "the most masterly scene Disraeli ever wrote."[32] We have already had occasion to note how throughout the book Disraeli has punctured the pretensions of both Catholics and revolutionaries alike by humour and this is surely the most important example. In Chapter LXVIII the Cardinal comments on the disparity between the two events, dismissing the account of the only eye-witness, Lothair himself. Not only Lothair, but the reader is aghast at the lengths of self-deception to which the Cardinal (and, by implication the other Roman Catholics - certainly Roman society) will go. But one must further emphasize that the book is, in a sense, laughing at itself, since earlier it had seemed to take Lothair's enthusiasms at least as seriously as he had himself, and this scene is perhaps their logical conclusion. Astonishingly, Lothair has managed to commit himself so far to both sides in the conflict that he can be wounded fighting for one, be claimed for a champion by the other, and finally be told by the Cardinal, "'Your case is by no means an uncommon one. It will wear off with returning health. King George IV. believed that he was at the battle of Waterloo, and indeed commanded there; and his friends were at one time a little alarmed'" (p.279).

31. Blake, Disraeli, p.518.

32. Smith, "Mid-Victorian Novelists," p.206.

What Disraeli has managed to do here is to conflate two of his most consistently used methods in a most sophisticated manner. To begin with there is the question of doubles: what Lothair actually did and what he might well have done; what he believes he did, and what he is thought to have done. Both sides of his character are present here. Lothair's actual behaviour and the account in the newspaper are laid side by side for the reader to compare, and to recognize that despite the lies for which the newspaper is responsible and which the Cardinal defends, it is little more than chance that he was actually fighting on the revolutionary and not the Papal side, and to feel that his reception into the Catholic Church by the Pope himself, which is planned for the following day, would in many ways be a satisfactory and fitting conclusion to his adventures. The inaccuracy of the newspaper account brings within the novel itself that contrast between "fact" and fiction which has been such a consistent part of his work. In these ways the central division of the book and Lothair's responsibility for it are both brought out, and can be discussed openly. Just as a comparison of Vivan Grey and Beckendorff presented the reader with the actual and the (unachieved) potential of the same man, so here Disraeli can present a double portrait of Lothair. The arbitrary nature of both his commitments is thus emphasized and their equal rejection forecast.

The use of doubles has been seen throughout Disraeli's work, and to a greater or lesser extent so has the mixture of earnest and mocking tones. In Lothair Disraeli combined the two with sparkling effect. Chapter LXVIII is a very serious revelation of the extent of deception to which the Cardinal will go, but the bland assurance with which he makes

his case is irresistably funny. The earnestness of the newspaper account is evident, yet to the reader who knows the truth, more than amusing. Lothair's despair is no doubt sincere but to have got himself in a position of being committed to both sides is largely a result of his naïveté. All these conflicts are apparent in this chapter when the revolutionary Lothair meets the Catholic Lothair, and begins to realize that neither is the true Lothair. In another humorous picture Lothair eventually has to acknowledge to himself what a bizarre picture he must have made at the thanksgiving ceremony which preceded the newspaper report: "a member of one of the highest orders of the British peerage carried in the procession a lighted taper after two angels with aramanthine flowers and golden wings" (p.282); but the recognition that he does belong to "one of the highest orders of the British peerage" and the implicit comparison with English life may be the beginning of the recognition of what he truly is, the beginning of the movement which concludes with his return to England. As Horsman says, "Disraeli has controlled the comedy of the whole novel so as to make his points indirectly rather than expounding them himself as he did in the forties."[33]

Perhaps this is the place to comment further on the prevalence of the gentle mockery throughout the book, what Ellen Moers so correctly calls "that odd, wry, half-cynical, half-tender humour which distinguishes Lothair and Endymion, his last and finest novels."[34] We have already mentioned

33. E.A. Horsman, On the Side of the Angels? Disraeli and the Nineteenth Century Novel (Dunedin, N.Z., 1973), p.54.

34. Ellen Moers, The Dandy: Brummel to Beerbohm (London, 1960), pp.101-2.

Lothair's return to London and the debunking of imagined crises, but generous and sympathetic teasing is the characteristic tone of the entire book. It can strike two targets at the same time: for instance, Lothair is in his innocence "captivated" by Baron Gozelius, an astronomer, who claims to have seen "'a world created and a world destroyed.... The last was flickering ten years, and it went out as I was watching it.' 'And the first?' enquired Lothair anxiously" (p.122). It is that last word which reveals both the naïveté of Lothair and the self-importance of Gozelius. When Lady St. Jerome thrills to the notion that "Providence, in its wisdom, had decreed that the world should be divided between the faithful and atheists.... It was a great trial; but happy was the man who was privileged even to endure the awful test" (p.43), Lothair innocently punctures her posture: "He feared he was not an archangel, and yet he longed to struggle with the powers of darkness" (p.43). Nor is it only Lothair who can achieve this effect. In the midst of the religious fervours at Lothair's coming-of-age celebrations, it is the delightful St. Aldegonde who destroys the atmosphere. The Catholic contingent have gone to Mass in Grandchester:

> But the Anglican portion of the guests were not without their share of ecclesiastical and spiritual excitement.... The Bishop was standing near the mantelpiece talking to the ladies, who were clustered round him; the Archdeacon and the Chaplain and some clergy a little in the background; Lord St. Aldegonde... listened, as it were grimly, for a few moments to their talk; then he suddenly exclaimed in a loud voice, and with the groan of a rebellious Titan, "How I hate, Sunday!" (pp.187-8)

It is not for nothing that Monty Corry (later Lord Rowton) recalled Disraeli saying that novel writing "requires first rate 'narrative power,' first rate descriptive and first rate dramatic power and above (all) a sense of humour."[35]

In this novel at least, Disraeli was aware of the component parts of his writing, the romance and the mockery, the sincerity and the satire, and was putting them to use creatively. He talks, at different times in the novel, of "mockery blended with Ionian splendour" (p.124), or "'perfect romance... with a due admixture of reality'" (p.142), and he contrasts "'the base'" with "'the superstructure of the narrative'" (p.278) - all of which suggests that he is no stranger to the idea of juxtaposing such structural elements.[36] While Blake identifies accurately the elements of Disraeli's style, I think he is mistaken to include Lothair among the novels with an "ambiguous" tone. He writes of

> that fascinating and faintly disturbing ambiguity which in Lothair and the trilogy of the 1840s so often leaves us uncertain whether the author is mocking or accepting the political beau-monde of which he was master in both fiction and reality.

35. Blake, Disraeli, p.732.

36. This will become even more marked in Endymion, where Disraeli constantly uses such phrases as "blended love and mockery" (p.45), "blended mockery and affection" (p.58), "half mockery and half good nature" (p.132), "half with fondness and half with scepticism" (p.213) and "some affection blended with mockery" (p.270); but as early as Coningsby, Sidonia's own style had been described thus: "A slight spirit of mockery played over his speech even when you deemed him most serious; you were startled by his sudden transitions from profound thought to poignant sarcasm" (p.117).

> The subtle blend of irony, satire and romance which gives Disraeli's best novels a flavour unlike anything else in literature is found to perfection in Lothair.[37]

It is indeed found to perfection in Lothair, but surely here there is no ambiguity.

Ambiguous has indeed been a constant description of Disraeli's work, though the term has been applied mostly pejoratively. Writing of Tancred R.A. Levine comments, "The most interesting and teasing problem in discussing Disraeli's humor resides in that middle area of ambiguity where one must ask whether the humor is present for its own sake (as it is so often) or whether the humor functions organically in terms of the novel's theme or plot."[38] The question, "how much was ironical or satirical, and how much soberly intended?" has dogged Disraeli criticism.[39] The author himself dealt with it fairly vigorously: "When a critic remarks that it is difficult to know whether an author is in earnest or in jest, I think it safe to hold the critic is a blockhead."[40] Later, in Endymion, he criticized "every Countess in Mayfair" who on reading a novel does not know "the idiot, whether she ought to smile or shed tears" (p.106).

Henry James thought he knew the appropriate reaction to Lothair:

37. Blake, Disraeli, p.735.

38. R.A. Levine, "Disraeli's 'Tancred;'" p.77 n.13.

39. Monypenny and Buckle, II.510.

40. Zetland, I.158-9. Letter of 10 October 1874.

> But here Mr. Disraeli's deplorable levity begins. The whole book is remarkably easy to laugh at, and yet from the first, one may say, the reader's imagination, even the American reader's, is more in earnest than the author's.... We shall endure "Lothair" only so long as Lothair alone puts in a claim for the romantic, for the idea of elegance and opulence and splendour.... His purpose - his instinct, at least - has been to portray with all possible completeness a purely aristocratic world.... [H]e has expressed with such lavish generosity the ducal side of the question.[41]

But this approach still separates the two attitudes; that of the author is frivolous and sumptuous, and that of the reader more earnest.

Much more interesting and positive an approach comes from E.A. Horsman. He says that Disraeli's "skill as a novelist lies in managing the sympathies of his readers, in making them think but denying them certainty as to what he thinks himself," and later, "What is said is not taken simply as what the author believes to be so, but rather as a method of examining what he might believe."[42] Conflicting attitudes which yet manage to retain their individual viability are presented to the reader. This is made possible by the encompassing vocabulary of the novel which connects its central concerns with such elasticity that at any time it can support whatever attitudes are needed, yet meshes the book together firmly enough for such attitudes to be in constant conjunction. This is not to say that Disraeli in himself is confused, or does not know what he thinks; but the stimulus of this approach may often make the reader unsure of his own opinions. To quote Robert Hamilton, "The best of his work

41. Henry James, "Lothair by Lord Beaconsfield," in Literary Reviews and Essays, ed. Albert Mordell (New York, 1957), pp. 304, 307.

42. Horsman, pp.7, 14.

combines the imaginative and the didactic.... The play of his extraordinary mind is always stimulating and attractive."[43]

Sheila M. Smith described the same phenomenon when she talked of "the ambivalent tone of combined mockery and admiration, in which neither the mockery nor the admiration is lost or destroyed";[44] she recognized the equal importance of the two parts and, more importantly, she finds the attitude ambivalent, rather than ambiguous. Since the episode between Lothair and the Cardinal in Ch. LXVIII so clearly makes positive use of both attitudes, it might be as well to take another example, one which has raised critical hackles. At the very beginning of the novel the Duchess and her daughters are in the morning room at Brentham:

> One knitted a purse, another adorned a slipper, a third emblazoned a page. Beautiful forms in counsel leant over frames glowing with embroidery, while two fair sisters more remote occasionally burst into melody, as they tried the passages of a new air, which had been communicated to them in the manuscript of some devoted friend. (p.3)

Although his reference is not precise, I think it must be this passage that R.J. Cruikshank is thinking of when he writes, "at his worst, in his descriptions of ducal breakfasts, and in his accounts of 'fair forms bending over embroidery frames,' Disraeli is comically like Ouida."[45] But is this Disraeli at his worst? If so one cannot rate him very highly as an author, for it is Disraeli at nearly his most character-

43. Hamilton, p.105.

44. Smith, "Mid-Victorian Novelists," p.199.

45. Cruikshank, p.61.

istic.

John Holloway, the most perceptive modern writer on Disraeli, says, "Disraeli's farcical and fantastic touches are a kind of safety-valve; they provide for scepticism because they do not have to be taken in full seriousness; they invite us to suspend disbelief for the sake of fairy-tale pleasures," and Walter Sichel also speaks approvingly of Disraeli's "political fairy tales."[46] Interestingly enough, Disraeli uses the same term in Lothair. The Duchess criticizes Lothair's early plans for his future with Corisande, "'But that would be a fairy tale'" (p.15), Fenian activities are dismissed by a real revolutionary as "a fairy tale" (p.91), the most exotic of Lothair's coming-of-age celebrations are likened to "Arabian tales" (p.195), the scene after the ball was like "the castle in the fairy tale inhabited by the Sleeping Beauty" (p.197) and, as we have seen earlier, Lothair's involvement with the Roman Catholic Church causes him to be described as "spell-bound, as much as any knight in fairy tale" (p.281). The significant thing is that all these references are dismissive.[47] The fairy

46. Holloway, p.105; Sichel, "Lord Beaconsfield as a landscape painter," p.533.

47. Again in Endymion Disraeli describes lime trees in bloom as "trees in some fairy tale of imprisoned princesses or wandering cavaliers, and such they would remain, until the fatal night that brings the first frost" (p.59). The cruel honesty of the last clause surely removes any lingering sentimentality about fairy stories. Even when Imogene later in the novel describes the great successes that the Ferrars twins achieved as "'What we used to dream about, and wished a fairy would accomplish,'" she immediately continues to place the idea into the book's vocabulary of destiny: "'and somehow felt that, somehow or other, they must happen'" (p.216). The idea of the fairy story is not given any validity in itself.

tale is not something which Disraeli would offer as a reward for reading his books.[48]

Where Holloway is on stronger ground is when he says that the inclusion of all the splendour "provide[s] for scepticism." A tone is achieved which allows for both respect and mockery, and Horsman again makes the important point: "Mockery is paradoxically the tribute of respect: only what he really thinks valuable is worth mocking."[49] Edmund Gosse says of Lothair that "this gorgeous story... is an immense satire from first to last.... [T]he magnificence... was intentional. It was thus that Disraeli loved to see life, and most of all, the life he laughed at.... The splendour is part of the satire."[50] In other words, to return to the "fair forms bending over embroidery frames," Disraeli wishes to reveal his pleasure that such a magnificent life-style is possible, while simultaneously exaggerating it into near-impossibility, and allowing the exaggeration to provoke the laughter that any extreme deserves. Again Horsman puts the point clearly: "It is the kind of satire, which, from Disraeli, implies respect - respect for the possibilities rather than for achievement."[51] Since, more than any of his books, this is the one which criticizes excesses, it is natural that it is here that his characteristic mixture of romance and reality should be perfected. It is, after all, the father of the girls described above who "every day... offered his grateful thanks to Providence that his

48. J.A. Froude recounts that in 1836 "a proposal was made to [Disraeli] to edit the 'Arabian Nights' with notes and an additional tale." After Alroy, one can only agree with his judgement that "Happily for his literary reputation this adventure was not prosecuted." Froude, p.64.

49. Horsman, p.41.

50. Gosse, p.174.

51. Horsman, p.54.

family were not unworthy of him" (p.4).

As has only too frequently been the case, the common knowledge of Disraeli's life has encouraged critics to take the simplest view of his style. In 1844 Thackeray wrote of Coningsby that

> it is vastly too ornamental, energetic, and tawdry for our quiet habits. The author's coxcombry is splendid... refulgent.... In the midst of his satire, coxcombry intervenes, and one is irresistibly led to satirize the satirizer....[O]ne may be pretty sure of not being able to turn half-a-dozen leaves without coming upon something outrageous.[52]

Though this would have to be accepted were it describing Alroy or parts of Tancred, one cannot help but be suspicious that here Thackeray's blindness to any positive use to which the "coxcombry" might be put stems from his dislike of Disraeli's personal dandyism. Twenty-four years later the Fortnightly Review declared Disraeli to be "a man in whom the coldest, hardest, the most cynical and scornful intellect scarcely controls an imagination which revels in colour, brocade, and literary spangle, and with a revelry which the reader feels to be one of physical, almost sensual delight."[53] While one would not argue with the notion of the physical sensual delight in which Disraeli revels, the hostility behind the writing is obvious. Maurois is right when he says,

> It was a commonplace amongst summary judges to explain Disraeli by saying "He is an Oriental." It was an inaccurate label, a judgement too scanty

52. Thackeray, ed. Ray, pp.40-1.

53. Bernard Cracroft, "Mr. Disraeli, the novelist," Fortnightly Review, Vol.10 (1868), p.146.

> in light and shade. Brought up as an Englishman, shaped by English thought, surrounded by English friends, passionately attached to England, he was much further removed from a Jew of the East than from a man like George Bentinck.[54]

The emphasis on the splendour of Disraeli's prose comes perilously close to anti-semitism at times,[55] and Sheila M. Smith is right to criticize those "critics of Disraeli, who... too often emphasize his romantic, luxuriant imagination."[56]

While the way of life of the aristocracy is relished in Lothair, like everyone else they are having fun poked at them. Speare recognizes that Lothair is "a grand satire of the ruling nobility... if ever there was one."[57] Froude had previously put forward the idea, simultaneously recognising how opinions about Disraeli's personality and history had blinded critics to its truth:

> [Lothair] was supposed, on its first appearance, to be a vulgar glorification of the splendours of the great English nobles into whose society he [Disraeli] had been admitted as a parvenu, and whose condescension he rewarded by painting them in their indolent magnificence. The glitter and tinsel was ascribed to a Jewish taste for tawdry decoration, while he, individually, was thought to be glutted to satiation in the social Paradise.[58]

But as I have pointed out previously, Disraeli had always been a critic of the aristocracy, and Froude supports this contention:

> The true value of the book is the perfect representation of patrician society in England in the year which was then passing over; the full appreciation of all that was good and noble in it; yet the

54. Maurois, p.200.

55. One might instance, "At every line one sees the Jew and the rings on his fingers." Edmond Scherer, Essays on English Literature, trans. G. Saintsbury (London, 1891), p.213.

56. Smith, "Willenhall and Wodgate," p.384.

57. Speare, p.107.

58. Froude, p.216.

> recognition, also, that it was a society without a purpose, and with no claim to endurance. It was then at its most brilliant period, like the full bloom of flower which opens fully only to fade.[59]

It is this combined attitude which Maurois calls "a desire for the good things of this world and a perception of their hollow emptiness."[60] We may instance Apollonia's dinner table, which

> seemed literally to groan under vases and gigantic flagons, and, in its midst, rose a mountain of silver, on which apparently all the cardinal virtues, several of the pagan deities, and Britannia herself, illustrated with many lights a glowing inscription which described the fervent feelings of a grateful client. (p.24)

Besides the multiple references to Christian morality, pagan religion and patriotism so typical of the concerns of Lothair, Apollonia's pretensions have been revealed in all their "hollowness." When a portfolio is presented to Lothair, it is "of morocco and of prelatial purple with broad bands of gold and alternate ornaments of a cross and coronet. A servant handed to Lothair a letter, which enclosed the key that opened its lock." The suspicion that the sumptuousness of the description gives rise to is confirmed one line later: "after the first fever of investigation was over, he required sympathy and also information" (p.59). In other words, Disraeli's enjoyment of vitality and richness does not render him incapable of certain grandiose descriptions which are essentially unsympathetic. John Holloway instances the religious procession in Ch. LXVI of Lothair, in which "Disraeli

59. Froude, p.231.

60. Maurois, p.201.

refuses to find the qualities of life that he finds so often."[61] To sum up, Disraeli is capable of some descriptions which completely balance the gorgeousness and the mockery, some where gentle mockery is predominant, and others which are sternly critical. In Lothair, where each thematic concept is both respected and teased, this skill is at its clearest, though it is present in all his works.

In his Introduction to Sybil (1895), H.D. Traill argued that there have been no political novels since Disraeli because the age had become more earnest, and he extended the idea two years later. Of the later, more earnest politicians he wrote, "These worthy persons yield infinitely less artistic material than the unworthy person whom they have... displaced. The New Politican may be respectable, but he is not picturesque."[62] He argues that after Disraeli it is no longer possible to combine instruction and amusement in a political novel and it takes only a little development of this idea to come to the conclusion that it may be Disraeli's characteristic style of writing which made the political novel itself possible. It is, of course, a commonplace to claim that Disraeli's unique position - his incomparable knowledge of the political events of his day - is what made him the master of the political novel, but Marius Bewley is saying something rather different: "It is Victorian politics that we have to thank not only for having developed a great prime minister, but for having rescued an artist....[T]he same factors are operating both in the novels and the politics."[63]

61. Holloway, p.102.

62. H.D. Traill, The New Fiction and Other Essays on Literary Subjects (London, 1897), p.33.

63. Bewley, pp.7-8.

If we look again at some of the critical descriptions of Disraeli's contrasting abilities we may begin to see how events and style may be mutually dependent. In 1827 the reviewer of the second part of Vivian Grey in the North American Review commented that "the narrative... is made up of a motley mixture of romance and reality, of rapid transition from the humdrum business of everyday to the most barefaced absurdities of Fairy Land."[64] Walter Sichel made a distinction between "a sense of mystery and the impulse to control."[65] Raymond Maitre shook his head over the "Éternelle ambiguité d'attitude disraélienne!" which, writing of Sybil he defined as "d'une part le réalisme, et la fantaisie, de l'autre une émotion sincère et un détachement ironique." [66] Before the political world claimed to be totally in earnest, Disraeli could describe its foibles, while maintaining a romantic attachment to its ideals,[67] in a style the characteristic strength of which is the ability to range from almost mystic idealism to humdrum realism. One could argue that the political novel must be capable of encompassing both the concepts of a political philosophy and the mundane demands of everyday expediency. More than anything else this is what Disraeli's later method of writing could do; perhaps it is the inability to develop

64. North American Review, Vol.25 (1827), p.199.

65. Sichel, Disraeli, p.172.

66. Maitre,pp.280, 306.

67. Clyde J. Lewis argues persuasively that the attitudes present in the novels remained Disraeli's ultimate motives behind policies which may have changed due to political exigencies. See Lewis, "Theory and Expediency in the Policy of Disraeli," Victorian Studies, Vol.IV (1961), pp.237-58.

such a style which has been responsible for the dearth of good political novels after him?

CHAPTER EIGHT: Endymion

Endymion was published in 1880, a full decade after Lothair, but it has long been realized that the two books have closer connections than the period between them would suggest. The novel was in fact begun during the summer of 1870, soon after the publication of Lothair. Between then and Mary Anne Disraeli's death in the autumn of 1872 Disraeli almost certainly wrote the first sixty chapters, over half the book; chapters LXI to LXXVIII were probably written in the late summer and autumn of 1878 when he was again Prime Minister, and he finished the final chapters in May, June and July of 1880.[1] In the correspondence over the publication of the novel, Longman twice calls it "Lothair's brother," as does Lord Rowton, Disraeli's secretary.[2]

On the surface it is quite easy to answer Edmond Scherer's

1. See Robert Blake, "The Dating of 'Endymion,'" Review of English Studies, Vol.17 N.S. (1966), pp.177-82.

2. See Annabel Jones, "Disraeli's Endymion: a case study," in Asa Briggs, ed., Essays in the History of Publishing: Longman, 1724-1974 (London, 1974), pp.141-186.

question - why is this novel described as "by the author of Lothair"?[3] Though the novel is set more than a decade earlier than Lothair (1827 to 1855, as opposed to the late 1860s) it only confirms the continuity of his interests. Chapter XCIX of Endymion, for example, describes how

> his Holiness the Pope had made half a dozen new cardinals, and to the surprise of the world... there appeared among them the name of an Englishman.... Shortly after this, a papal bull... was issued, establishing a Roman hierarchy in England. This was soon followed by a pastoral letter by the new cardinal... announcing that "Catholic England had been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament." (pp.455-6)

The effect of these acts, so briefly touched upon here, is the background to Lothair. The English cardinal in Endymion is Nigel Penruddock, whose conversion to the Catholic faith has "produced a considerable effect in what is called society" (p.371): Lothair's guardian, Cardinal Grandison, had travelled the same road and, although this "earlier" picture is a harsher portrait, both characters obviously owe something to Cardinal Manning. Manning himself, according to Wilfred Meynell, "knew the difference between this portrait [in Endymion] and that in Lothair; and, so far as he allowed himself to dwell on it, did so with gratification: "It is quite another story,' was his admission, made to me with evident pleasure."[4] Myra, Endymion's twin and alter ego, is received into the church, which causes Endymion some soul-searching: he tells the archbishop, "'the secession of my sister from the Church of her fathers was to me by no means a matter of unmixed satisfaction'" (p.430). As I hope

3. Scherer, p.208.

4. Wilfred Meynell, Disraeli (London, 1903), II.532.

to show later, these twins are Disraeli's most extreme form of doubles. It is not too fanciful to argue that in this exchange between Endymion and the archbishop about the former's sister, there is more than an echo of Lothair's argument about his own "conversion" with Cardinal Grandison in the central confrontation in Lothair. It is significant that the passage from Endymion immediately develops into a discussion of the role of the Jesuits: the manner of Lothair's "conversion" might well have been called Jesuitical.

If one extreme in Lothair was the Roman Catholic Church, the other was the secret societies. They are not forgotten in Endymion: "'Europe is honeycombed with [them]. They are spread all over Spain. Italy is entirely mined'" (p.32); "'You have no conception of the devices and resources of the secret societies of Europe.... [They are] active confederates in bringing about events which might have occasioned an European war'" (p.176); "'Secret societies laugh at governments'" (p.177). When Endymion comes to political power he supports an alliance with a "great Liberal party of the continent as distinguished from the secret societies and the socialist republics" (p.464). We even find a contrast made between the societies and Roman Catholicism which is very reminiscent of Lothair: "'There is more true democracy in the Roman Catholic Church than in all the secret societies of Europe'" (p.373). However, as I shall demonstrate later, Disraeli has moved from the specific question of secret societies to the more general question of revolution - its place in a pattern of historical

change, the question of its inevitability, and individual reaction to it.

Lothair was critical of extreme positions whether religious or political, and equally critical of those who held or encouraged excessive attitudes. Though Mr. Ferrars, whose "masterly articles in [the] great Review... kept up that increasing feeling of terror and despair which then was deemed necessary to the advancement of Conservative opinions" (p.56), is to be found in Endymion, the critical tone is an echo from Lothair. St. Barbe's remark that "'They say no artist can draw a camel'" (p.468) comes directly from Lothair, when Mr. Phoebus declares that "'they say no one can draw a camel'" (p.305), and Mr. Wilton's delightful answer to a mother's worry that he son "'seems... always to be thinking'" - "'Well, a public school will rouse him from his reveries'" (p.21) - seems also to have its source in Mr. Phoebus. He consoles Lothair thus: "'You are young and not irremediably lost.... Fortunately you have received the admirable though partial education of your class. You are a good shot, you can ride, you can row, you can swim. That imperfect secretion of the brain which is called thought has not yet bowed your frame'" (p.308).

We can, however, trace similarities to Endymion further back than Lothair. Towards the end of Endymion Disraeli writes of "a gentleman [who] without any official experience whatever, was not only placed in the cabinet, but was absolutely required to become the leader of the House of Commons" (p.461); the gentleman was of course himself, described in exactly the same

sort of anonymous circumlocution which he had used in his biography of Lord George Bentinck.

There are even further and earlier echoes:

> "No man will treat with indifference the principle of race. It is the key of history, and why history is often so confused is that it has been written by men who were ignorant of this principle and all the knowledge it involves.... In Europe I find three great races with distinct qualities.... There is another great race which influences the world, the Semites... [who] now exercise a vast influence over affairs by their smallest though most peculiar family, the Jews. There is no race gifted with so much tenacity, and such skill in organisation." (pp.248-9)

Though this actually comes from Endymion it could easily have come from Tancred. Criticism of the Church of England also occurs in both novels. In Endymion we read,

> The English Church had no competent leaders among the clergy.... To have edited a Greek play with second-rate success, or to have been the tutor of some considerable patrician, was the qualification then deemed desirable and sufficient for an office.... It is since the depths of religious thought have been probed... that fascinating... prelates... have re-established the influence which in old days guided a Matilda or the mother of Constantine. (p.29)

In Tancred the emphasis of what is an extremely similar passage is different:

> The Church of England, mainly from it deficiency of oriental knowledge, and from a misconception of the priestly character which has been the consequence of that want, has fallen of late years into great straits.... The Arch-Mediocrity['s]... notion of clerical capacity did not soar higher than a private tutor who had suckled a young noble into university honours; and his test of priestly celebrity was the decent editorship of a Greek play. He sought for the successors of the apostles, for the stewards of the

> mysteries of Sinai and of Calvary, among the third-rate hunters after syllables. (pp.70-1)

Religion which exists in its own right as the subject of Tancred is there seen in its spiritual aspect. In Endymion, however, which, as we will see, deals with conflicting notions of historical change and personal success, an almost identical passage has been translated into those terms. In Tancred it is the Church itself which is in great "straits." In Endymion this becomes its lack of "competent leaders." To have "suckled a young noble" is dignified as "to have been the tutor of some considerable patrician" (my underlining),"the decent editorship of a Greek play" becomes a question of "success" and both become the qualifications for office, rather than "clerical capacity." In Tancred the passage continues into the "mysteries of Sinai and of Calvary"; in Endymion the influence of priests in powerful circles is much more important.

There are even echoes from Sybil in Endymion. Job Thornberry's father is described as "a thorough Saxon, ruddy and bright visaged" (p.51), in a manner very reminiscent of the praise of all things Saxon in that novel, and in Endymion's sometime task of discovering "'the state of the country, the real feelings and condition of the bulk of the population'" (p.272), one is reminded of Egremont's own education. There are humorous echoes too, as with Lothair. Waldershare and Tadpole's concern that Peel should not be held responsible for "the bad harvests [which]...[t]he present men are clearly responsible for" (p.312) echoes Sybil's "the great measures of

Sir Robert Peel, which produced three good harvests" (p.488).

One can even go back as far as Vivian Grey, written over half a century previously. In that book Frederick Cleveland, after being refused political office, retires with his wife to North Wales, where a beautiful son and daughter are born to him. His four-year exile makes him wretched, until Vivian Grey tempts him back into public life, where he is again ruined and dies in a duel. Mr. Ferrars senior in Endymion has a much larger role to play and his ruin and rural seclusion (this time in Berkshire) are described in more detail, but the essential pattern is the same, even down to the two children and the unnatural death.

There are echoes of Coningsby in Endymion which simultaneously reveal a similarity of interest and difference in treatment. Endymion is sent to "Lancashire, with its teeming and toiling cities, its colossal manufactories and its gigantic chimneys, its roaring engines and its flaming furnaces, its tramroads and its railroads, its coal and its cotton " (p.273), and he eventually makes Manchester his centre from which to study "'the great scenes of national labour'" (p.272). The discovery of the industrial north does not play as important a part in Endymion's life as it did in Coningsby's, but the parallel is there.

Perhaps a more important point about Endymion's relationship to Disraeli's earlier novels is suggested by a reviewer's remark that "The Tory party here ridiculed is the party as it existed

when Vivian Grey aspired to its leadership."[5] Granted that the old Tory party was ridiculed in Vivian Grey and is again here, what might appear more surprising is that the ideas of Young England are also mocked in Endymion. Young England is represented by Waldershare, who takes many of his characteristics from George Smythe; indeed Smythe's very words in a speech at Canterbury in 1847, included in the memoir of him printed with his posthumously published novel Angela Pisani (1875), are given to Waldershare: "'Is not the Tory party... a succession of heroic spirits, "beautiful and swift," ever in the van, and foremost of their age?'" Disraeli does not allow such beliefs to stand unchallenged: "'He is a wonderful man - Mr. Waldershare,' said Mr. Vigo to Rodney, 'but I fear not practical'" (p.173). The ridiculous excesses of his opinions force the reader to reject them: "'One never sees a pottle of strawberries now. I believe they went out, like all good things, with the Stuarts'" (p.459).

This mockery of Young England has been regarded as partial evidence of an authorial attitude of tired detachment from the ideals of Disraeli's youth. Critics have pointed out that Smythe was not only behind Waldershare, but also behind Coningsby, whose idealism is certainly afforded more respect. While it is true that Coningsby as a whole does take Young England more seriously than Endymion, the opinions of Coningsby's more extreme friends are laughed at just as much as Waldershare's.

5. John MacCarthy, American Catholic Quarterly Review, Vol.6 (1881), p.131.

The Dublin Review advanced another argument connecting Endymion and Coningsby when it said of Lord Montfort that "something very like him has, however, appeared from the author's pen, when, years ago, it traced the figure of Lord Monmouth in 'Coningsby,'" and Blake suggested that the only difference was that Lord Montfort was "a milder version of the Monmouth who dominates Coningsby."[6] The use of the word "milder" is interesting, and reflects another common attitude to Endymion, akin to the attribution of detachment - that the author is "tired." Blake clearly likes the novel; earlier he has characterized it as "one of the most mellow, delightful, and engagingly improbable romances to issue from [Disraeli's] pen," but R.W. Stewart puts his finger on the more usual reaction when he writes, "There is a mellowness, a repose, or is it merely weariness?"[7]

The apparent "borrowings" and supposedly less committed stance could, of course, be taken as the sign of an author whose invention is flagging, but as I have tried to show, Disraeli's work has been one of constant development in which

6. Dublin Review, Vol.88 (1889), p.154; Blake, Disraeli, p.736.

7. Blake, Disraeli, p.733; Stewart, Benjamin Disraeli: a List of writings, p.85. Monypenny and Buckle suggest as evidence of Disraeli's detachment that Lord Roehampton is a complimentary portrait of Palmerston, whom Disraeli satirized as the "Lord Fanny of diplomacy" in his Runneymede Letters of 1836-7 (Monypenny and Buckle, I.984), though a comparison of campaigning journalism and imaginative literature is hardly justified. A third "disenchantment" is that the hero turns from his father's Conservative principles and becomes a Whig! Maitre even suggests that the change of affiliation is reflected in the manner of the book's telling: "L'histoire de William Ferrars est contée du point de vue Tory contrairement à celle d'Endymion" (Maitre, p.323 n.40). Though it is true that William Ferrars is a Tory and his son a Whig, the real importance of the change is that it is another example of the unpredictability of events rather than an illustration of Disraeli's detachment; the junior members of the Neuchatel family change parties with equal ease.

both his interests and his techniques have been constantly evolving. They may have changed, but they have not been discarded, and Lord Monmouth/Montfort is a case in point. Disraeli's interest in a man whose very position in society gave him political power (although, according to Disraeli, he was misusing it) would remain constant. In Coningsby where the growth of a political party is being analyzed, Monmouth, as the representative of the older generation, wickedly trying to thwart the new party, is shown as selfish, harsh and vindictive. (His treatment of his son is called "A system of domestic persecution, sustained by the hand of a master... who... was above all without scruples, prejudices, and fears" (pp.8-9).) Endymion, however, is not so partisan. Its achievement is to consider the broader concept of historical change, success and failure. Within that context, the figure of a man of potential political power, who breaks the accepted social codes for selfish reasons, can only be a minor illustration of Disraeli's subject. Montfort's power, or lack of it, to get Endymion a Parliamentary seat, his refusal to forward his wife's social career, are seen as part of the pattern of change, rather than examples of his malice. This is the true reason for the difference in presentation, and neither "mellowness" nor "weariness."

The critics' difficulty in assessing Endymion (and, to a lesser degree, Lothair) has arisen from two main sources. The first was Disraeli's own position as head of his party, Prime Minister and statesman. Disraeli's own personality and career consistently bedevilled critical assessment - and never more

so than when he had reached "the top of the greasy pole." Melville W. Fuller, for example, claimed in his Dial review that Endymion's success was only due to the author's fame and the number of portraits it contained.[8]

The second problem comes from a misunderstanding of Disraeli as a writer of political novels. Too often political novels were regarded - in his time and even now - simply as books whose explicit subject was party politics. When Disraeli's novels cease to have such a subject, critics fail to see them as political. Endymion has been called "his last society novel"

8. See Melville W. Fuller, "Beaconsfield's Novels," Dial, Vol. I (1881), pp.188-9. Although I agree with R.W. Stewart that Endymion "is not a roman à clef," one should acknowledge that various identifications have been made. Stewart, Benjamin Disraeli: a List of writings, p.85. The charming description of the relationship between a minister and his secretary in Ch. XLIX is perhaps a tribute to Corry, and the description of dinner at Bertie Tremaine's in Ch. XXXVII could be a memory of a dinner at Lytton Bulwyer's. See Disraeli's Reminiscences, ed. Swartz and Swartz, p.12. Sir Fraunceys Scrope has been identified as Sir Francis Burdett, Zenobia as Lady Jersey, Sidney Wilton as Sidney Herbert, Neuchatel as Rothschild, Job Thornberry as both Cobden and Bright, Vigo as both Poole the tailor and Hudson, Florestan as Louis Napoleon, Count Ferroll as Bismark, Gushy as Dickens, Sergius as Metternich. Monypenny and Buckle claim that Dilke is behind Endymion himself (II.1475), but whether St. Barbe is Thackeray, or Hayward (see Sichel, Disraeli, p.17n), or Carlyle (see James D. Merritt, "The novelist St. Barbe in Disraeli's 'Endymion': Revenge on whom?," Nineteenth Century Fiction, Vol.23 (1968), pp.85-8), is not easy to say. In Punch there appears the following footnote on a character named Gladstars, in a parody of Endymion: "Earl to Editor - 'See the joke? They'll think I mean this for W.E.G. But do I? Watch me carefully and you'll see - what you will see.'" Much identification does not rise above this level, and certainly adds nothing to one's understanding of the novel. "Ben D'Ymion. By the author of Loafair," Punch, Vol.79 (4 Dec. 1880), p.262.

or "quite untendentious."[9] R.W. Stewart comes nearer the mark when he says, "it is not... really a political commentary. It is a picture of a vanished world, recalled with affection tinged with cynicism, and described with wit."[10] Endymion is indeed not a political commentary but it is political in a broader sense. After Coningsby Disraeli's political concerns progressively widen. Increasingly he uses his novels not to dissect particular political questions, let alone answer them, but to analyze what lay behind contemporary politics - whether in a social or even a spiritual sense. The progression culminates in Endymion.

The Times reviewer said that "though politics are the framework of the story, the politics are systematically relegated to the background.... [T]he political history of very many most eventful years is told rather by allusion than in consecutive detail."[11] This is certainly true of overt political comment - the culmination of a process which began when Sybil contained less than Coningsby. Like all Disraeli's novels, however, Endymion is precisely dateable, covering the period from Canning's death in 1827 until the defeat of the Coalition in 1855, and the events by which it can be dated are all political. Typically the opening of the book does not concern itself with these events in themselves, however, but their effect on the lives of two estranged friends,

9. Moers, p.96; Holloway, p.86.

10. R.W. Stewart, Benjamin Disraeli: a List of writings, p.85.

11. The Times, No.30,047 (24 Nov. 1880), p.10.

Sidney Wilton and William Ferrars, the former following Lord Roehampton and the latter the Duke of Wellington. It is the crisis in the fortunes of the less important men which engrosses the book's attention.

One may look at the following passage as an example of how broad the concept of politics is in Endymion. When the hero is working as a clerk in Somerset House, he is introduced to a debating society by Trenchard, and eventually his maiden speech is described:

> There was a debate one night on the government of dependencies, which, although all reference to existing political circumstances was rigidly prohibited, no doubt had its origin in the critical state of one of our most important colonies.... Endymion was sitting on a back bench, and with no companion near him with whom he was acquainted, when he rose and solicited the attention of the president.... [T]here was a cry of "new member," a courteous cry, borrowed from the House of Commons, and Endymion for the first time heard his own voice in public. He has since admitted, though he has been through many trying scenes, that it was the most nervous moment of his life.... [T]he first time a man speaks in public, even if only at a debating society, is... the unequalled incident.... The indulgence of the audience supported him while the mist cleared from his vision, and his palpitating heart subsided into comparative tranquillity. After a few pardonable incoherencies, he was launched into his subject. (p.157)

It is not until two hundred pages later that Endymion's maiden speech in the House of Commons is decribed - this too is on a matter of foreign policy; rather than "no companion" he has both Lord and Lady Roehampton and Lady Montfort in his audience. At the debating society he has an indulgent audience and "a few pardonable incoherencies"; in the Commons a "kind audience" and forgets "his first sentence" (p.364). In other words the

two experiences are directly comparable, but it is the former, where we are told that "all reference to existing political circumstances was rigidly prohibited," which is more important. The practised ability to speak in public will be of greater use in any career than one's first speech in the Commons, and it is significant that even when that is described, the precise matter with which it deals is omitted.

What then is the broader concept of politics with which Disraeli is dealing, and how does he incorporate it into his novel? The opening chapter defines the subject almost immediately. Although it seems to be about Canning's imminent death, we have noted earlier that it is the effect on Wilton and Ferrars which is more important; but we can go further than this. They discuss their earlier estrangement in general terms. Wilton calls the times "'an age of transition.... I cannot resist the feeling that this country... [is] on the eve of a great change;'" but Ferrars is more sanguine: "'I see no reason why there should be any great change.... Here we have changed everything that was required'" (p.3). Wilton cannot accept this view: "'Let some event suddenly occur which makes a nation feel or think, and the whole thing might vanish like a dream'" (p.4). The argument continues. In other words our attention is immediately turned to the very process of change and various attitudes towards change. Ferrars, who cannot accept the notion of change, is the man who is soon to become a political failure. The rise and fall of public men is part of the pattern of change that this book is about.

Nearly all the attitudes to change which the book reveals will be presented both earnestly and humorously, with typical Disraelian duality of vision. Already in the opening chapter we have an instance of that, in the characterization of Canning as a man with a mission: "'I thought he had a mission... and men with missions do not disappear till they have fulfilled them'" (p.2). Of course Canning's "mission" had died with him. In all the range of attitudes which are to follow, Disraeli has clearly begun by cutting the ground away from beneath one of the most extreme. It is much later in the book that Endymion says, more moderately, of the foolish Bertie Tremaine, "'Well, he has a purpose... and they say that a man with a purpose generally sees it realized'" (p.347). By then it will also be possible to recognize his remark as deflating the pretentious notion of destiny held by such characters as Florestan and, perhaps, Myra Ferrars.

The book recognizes quite openly that pure chance is part of the pattern of events. The next major political event after Canning's death is the fall of Wellington's Ministry in 1830. The Duke has to try to "cope with great and unexpected events. The first was the unexpected demise of the crown" (p.30). The advent of the railways during the depression of 1842 seems equally unaccountable:

> There were certain influences at work in the great body of the nation, neither foreseen, nor for some time recognized, by statesmen and those great capitalists on whose opinion statesmen much depend, which were stirring, as it were, like the unconscious power of the forces of nature, and which were destined to baffle all the calculations of persons in authority and the leading spirits of all parties, strengthen a perplexed administration,

> confound a sanguine opposition, render all the rhetoric, statistics, and subscriptions of the Anti-Corn-Law League fruitless, and absolutely make the Chartists forget the Charter. (pp.354-5)

The description of the events of 1845 and 1846 caused by the potato blight are couched in similar terms: "This mysterious but universal sickness of a single root changed the history of the world" (p.376).

Disraeli also dramatizes chance in his characters' lives and Myra's first marriage is an illustration of this. She herself comments, "'It is so sudden, and so strange, that you must be... astounded,'" though typically she intends to make use of her good fortune: "'More wonderful things will happen. We have now got a lever to move the world'" (p.198). As far as Endymion is concerned, there are two obvious instances of surprising good fortune. The first comes when Mr. Vigo, the tailor, offers him "'unlimited credit, and no accout to be settled till you are a privy councillor'" (p.103), and the second is an anonymous gift of "£20,000 consols, purchased that morning in the name of Endymion Ferrars, Esq. " (p.305), which enables him to stand for Parliament, a great assistance in what Blake calls "essentially the story of an ascent."[12] The Dublin Review also felt that good luck was the main force behind the plot despite the author's intention:

> Good fortune, not indomitable will is the good fairy of the story.... The gift [of £20,000] was anonymous and will be acknowledged to be a very splended deus ex machina, and worthy of a book whose hero, it is the aim of the author to show, conquers the world by force of will.[13]

12. Blake, Disraeli, p.738.

13. The Dublin Review, op.cit., pp.151, 156.

However, as we shall see, it is not as simple as that. Neither the novel nor its hero believes in the force of will - only Myra. Chance, as John Holloway quite properly recognizes, plays its part in the novel, the £20,000 being one example of it.[14]

Much has also been made of the good fortune that seems to smile on all the characters in the novel: "The novel is monotonously optimistic and all comes right."[15] Endymion becomes Prime Minister ("'I like young men who rise by their merits'" [17, (p.239)) and Myra actually becomes a Queen (an "enormous change in... position " (p.454)). Even the bashful Imogene appeared in "society, and it was successful" (p.287). "The chief personages are all parvenues or adventurers - the hero... as well as his sister, Ferroll as well as Florestan, Nigel Penruddock the future Cardinal as well as Imogene the future Duchess, Job Thornberry the manufacturer as well as Vigo the tailor."[16] This was one aspect of the book which was parodied in Punch: "Ben D'Ymion became an M.P. So did Kidley, the lodging-house-keeper. So did Pongo, the Sailor. So did everybody."[17]

But all these comments pay too little attention to the inclusion of adversity and its effects. The Times's "sensational effects, transitions and transformations"[18] do not all bring prosperity. The opening of the book charts the decline of the

14. See Holloway, pp.107-8.
15. Smith, "Mid-Victorian Novelists," p.208.
16. Scherer, pp.212-3.
17. "Ben D'Ymion," Punch, op.cit., p.287.
18. The Times, op.cit., p.10.

Ferrars family, which Endymion later remembers: "The terrible vicissitudes of his early years had gravely impressed his character.... [A] careful scrutiny of existing circumstances had prepared him for an inevitable change" (p.289). The effect of the past immediately leads Disraeli to further consideration of "inevitable change," the very subject of the novel. Endymion himself makes a similar connection. As

> "a parliamentary adventurer, I might swim or I might sink; the chances are it would be the latter, for storms would arise, when those disappear who have no root in the country, and no fortune to secure them breathing time and a future....I am only two-and-twenty, but I have had some experience, and it has been very bitter." (p.299; my underlining)

On the one occasion when Endymion does allow himself to consider the possibility of a happy, though humble marriage with Imogene, the narrator steps in with similar warnings:

> It did not yet occur to Endymion that his garden could not always be sunshiny; that cares crop up in villas, even semi-detached, as well as joys; that he would have children, and perhaps too many; that they would be sick, and that doctors' bills would soon put a stop to romantic excursions; that his wife would become exhausted with nursing and clothing and teaching them; that she herself would become an invalid, and moped to death. (p.214)

Myra, too, at the height of her success, remembers "years of patience, the most doleful, the most dreary, the most dark and tragical" (p.303), remembers "Hurstley with all its miseries" (p.401) and tells Endymion,

> "I am haunted with the perpetual thought that all this glittering prosperity will vanish as it did with our father.... Your present position, if you persist in it, is one most perilous. You have no root in the country; but for an accident you could not maintain the public position you have nobly gained." (pp.437-8)

Even Imogene, despite her success, cannot be allowed to forget her humble past: "'She was a shop-girl, was not she, or something of that sort?'" (p.287). Job Thornberry, now the Right Honourable Job Thornberry, cannot forget his childhood: "'There is a charm about the place... and yet I hated it as a boy. To be sure, I was then discontented and unhappy, and now I have every reason to be the reverse'" (p.407). Even the seemingly invulnerable Lady Montfort has to endure "a bitter trial" in "the real and somewhat mortifying state of affairs" of her first marriage (pp.233, 234).

But, as ever, Disraeli cannot leave the picture in this simple state. He also includes charactes who refuse to acknowledge their past. Of Sylvia he says,

> What was most remarkable about her was her convenient and complete want of memory. Sylvia had no past. She could not have found her way to Warwick Street to save her life. She conversed with Endymion with ease... you might have supposed that they had been born in the same sphere. (p.334)

Her motive, of course, is social convenience. Nigel Penruddock also, after his change of religion wishes to have no ties with his past: "The archbishop was a man who never recurred to the past. One never could suppose that Endymion and himself had been companions in their early youth" (p.429).

Disraeli also includes in the novel two comic characters whose opinions on the relationship of adversity to prosperity complicate the reader's reactions. The first of these is St. Barbe, whose envy contradicts his vanity: "'It is two years since we met. Well, I have done wonders; carried all before

me.... I did think I might some day live in the Albany. It was my dream. And you live there! Gracious! What an unfortunate fellow I am!'" (pp.223, 224). His envy turns his belief in his prosperity into a conviction of adversity. It is hardly surprising that his novel is called Topsy Turvey. In a very different way Lady Hainault has the same effect. She "had imbibed not merely a contempt for money, but absolutely a hatred of it. The prosperity of her house depressed her" (p.134). Her opinions on the equal distribution of wealth "which really sounded quite practical" (p.260) are regarded by her husband as "mystical revelations" (p.138) and consequently ignored. His gift of "another diamond necklace" is not worn - she "'must feel that I gave her diamonds from love and not from vanity, as she never lets me have the pleasure of seeing them'" (p.166). When Queen Myra returns on a state visit,

> the most brilliant, the most fanciful, infinitely the most costly entertainment that was given on this memorable occasion, was the festival at Hainault. The whole route from town... was lined with thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of spectators; a thousand guests were received at the banquet, and twelve palaces were raised... in the park, for the countless visitors in the evening. At night the forest was illuminated. Everyone was glad except Lady Hainault, who sighed, and said, "I have no doubt the Queen would have preferred her own room, and that we should have had a quiet dinner, as in old days, in the little Venetian parlour." (p.471)

Myra can say earnestly that "'the misery of the past... never can be forgotten'" (p.381), but Lady Hainault provides a comic variation on the same theme. The Dublin Review, with its consistent ability to come to the right conclusion for the wrong reasons, has a comment on Disraeli's use of adversity: "If the author's

object be to show how misfortune softens a proud heart, and changes a haughty manner... he signally fails. Endymion is described as chastened and improved by the lesson, but Myra grows even worse."[19] In fact, if Endymion's friends comment on what his character has become by saying that "there is no education like adversity" (p.273), we are also told that "adversity had taught Myra to feel and think" (p.163). But to look for a simple moral is fruitless; prosperity and adversity are both only part of a complex pattern of events.

It is not only Myra and Endymion who remember their earlier circumstances, nor are they the only ones whose early life was shadowed by financial ruin. In a set of doubles of the sort with which we have become familiar, Mr. and Mrs. Ferrars' story is closely connected with that of their servants. Sylvia goes into service because of her father's bankruptcy and is ruined again when the Ferrars' crash occurs. However, "there was a member of the household, or rather family, in Hill Street, who bore almost the same relation to Mr. Ferrars as Sylvia to his wife" (p.65). This is Rodney whom she marries. "The events of 1832, therefore, to this gentleman were scarcely a less severe blow than to the Ferrars family itself. Indeed, like his chief, he looked upon himself as the victim of a revolution" (p.66). They establish themselves and begin the climb back to respectability and even affluence.

Here as in earlier novels, Disraeli works by a series of juxtapositions. Like Sylvia's, Mr. Ferrars's ruin is partly

19. Dublin Review, op.cit., p.148.

caused by his father's financial mismanagement: he too suffers a double catastrophe for his return to London fulfils none of its promise and this is what causes the death of his wife. The similarities then take an altered form when his daughter Myra becomes Adriana Neuchatel's companion to recoup her fortunes, just as Sylvia had become his wife's companion; his son Endymion becomes the Rodneys' lodger and friend, in a house which they have gained through the unexpected generosity of Mr. Vigo, who is later to show an equal generosity to Endymion over the question of credit. With Sylvia's sister Imogene, overt comments on these juxtapositions are possible. When asked if, before her marriage to Lord Beaumaris, Imogene has been a shop-girl, Endymion replies, "'She and her family were very kind to me when I was not much better than a shop-boy myself'" (p.287), and Myra, now Lady Roehampton, comments on Imogene's marriage as "'A strange event!... But not stranger than what has happened to ourselves. Fortune seems to attend on our ruined home'" (p.252).

Florestan may perhaps be the prime example of the fluctuations of fortune. Myra says he was "'born in the purple, and his father was recognized by every government in Europe'" Then he becomes "'a prince in captivity'" (p.245), and although his escape and reassumption of his throne are described, he had first been seen in the novel living in England, dispossessed of his country and his fortune. Disaster can also strike the more humble; when Endymion first renews his acquaintance with Job Thornberry in Lancashire, he is suffering financially: "'it is a storm, a tempest, a wreck'" (p.279). When Lord Houghton wrote

of Thornberry in the Fortnightly Review, that "when Lord Beaconsfield touches the inner and mental life of a larger and sincere order of society, he either will not or cannot get beyond the satirical purpose,"[20] his attribution of intent is incorrect. Though Disraeli was capable of convincing character studies, Thornberry is not one of them, but neither is he being satirized. After the setback to his life as a manufacturer he goes on to become extremely successful and Disraeli does laugh at the vicissitudes of fortune which have made him a privy councillor:

> half a million of people had returned him their representative to parliament. And here he stood silent, and a little confused; sapped by his wife, bullied by his son, and after having passed a great deal of his life in denouncing sacerdotalism, finding his whole future career chalked out, without himself being consulted, by a priest who was so polite, sensible, and so truly friendly, that his manner seemed to deprive its victims of every faculty of retort or repartee. (p.412)

But he is not the only character who is laughed at; and more important than that is his part in illustrating the revolution of adversity and prosperity which afflicts so many of the characters in this novel.

Although the adversity lingers on in the minds of Myra and Endymion and the characters of St. Barbe and Lady Hainault, the actual descriptions of it occur almost entirely in the opening section of the book. The story of Endymion's grandfather, and his frustrated career and financial mismanagement of his own and son's money; that of Endymion's father and the double

20. Lord Houghton, "Notes on Endymion," Fortnightly Review Vol. 35 (1881), p.72.

catastrophes of 1832 and 1834, leading ultimately to his wife's madness and death, and his own suicide; all occur in the first twenty-nine chapters. "A considerable portion of the first volume, and a very heavy and laboured portion, deals with his father, and the series of political changes by which from a high position... he falls into what is described as ruin."[21] It is true to say that "The father and mother of the hero are the central figures of the first volume,"[22] and they are tragic figures. Even the house to which they retire in the country is melancholy; to Mr. Ferrars it is "associated only in his mind with exile, imprisonment, misfortune, almost disgrace" (p.73):

> At the foot of the Berkshire downs, and itself on a gentle elevation, there is an old hall with gable ends and lattice windows, standing in grounds which were once stately, and where there are yet glade-like terraces of yew trees, which give an air of dignity to a neglected scene.... Hurstley had for many years been deserted by the family to which it belonged.... A dreary fate had awaited an ancient and, in its time, even not immemorable home. It had fallen into chancery, and for the last half-century had either been uninhabited or let to strangers.[23] (pp.42-3)

Places are not as important in Endymion as they have been in earlier novels but a comparison of the above with the following description of Hainault House will show that they are still being put to the purpose of embodying the novel's major concerns. Hainault

21. Dublin Review, op.cit., p.147.

22. Fraser's Magazine, op.cit., p.708.

23. In view of the depressing nature of this description, it is surprising to find that Monypenny and Buckle claim that it describes Disraeli's Bradenham precisely. See I.124.

> had been raised by a British peer in the days when nobles were fond of building Palladian palaces.... [I]n its style, its beauty, and almost in its dimensions, [it] was a rival of Stowe or Wanstead. It stood in a deer park, and was surrounded by a royal forest. The family that had raised it wore out in the earlier part of this century. It was supposed that the place must be destroyed and dismantled.... In this dilemma, Neuchatel stepped in and purchased the whole affair - palace, and park, and deer, and pictures, and halls, and galleries of statue and bust, and furniture, and even wines, and all the farms that remained, and all the seigneurial rights in the royal forest.... [H]e spared nothing in the maintenance and the improvement of the domain.... "It will be ready for those who come after me." (pp.130-1)

Although both houses might have had to face the same dismal future, the latter description is full of preservation and stewardship, the "self-renewing traditionalism" of which John Holloway writes:

> Even Endymion has something of it, for the hero, rising from poverty to become Prime Minister, is only restoring the tradition of his father; while the great industrialist, Job Thornberry, becomes a landed patriarch and is jokingly called "Squire" by his sons.[24]

If then we argue that chance, adversity, prosperity and the changing fortune of events are important in the lives of the characters, what of the life of the country as a whole? I have argued that specifically political cause and effect do not play a major role in this novel, but that is not to say that Disraeli does not comment on change. The book is sprinkled with

24. Holloway, p.109. One might note here that the engagement of Endymion and Lady Montfort occurs when she shows him the library that she has prepared for him in her newly acquired house. Change may be inevitable, but conservation is clearly rewarded.

references both to what things were like before the date at which the book is set, and to how they have changed between then and the date of publication. These references are wide-ranging and pervasive:

> The season then was brilliant.... People did not go to various parties on the same night.... Conversation was more cultivated... and the world, being limited, knew itself much better. (pp.23-4)

> It is difficult for us, who live in an age of railroad, telegraphs, penny posts and penny newspapers, to realise how uneventful, how limited in thought and feeling, as well as in incident, was the life of an English family of retired habits and limited means, only forty years ago. (p.48)

> About this time the fashionable coffee-houses... had begun to feel the injurious competition of the new clubs that of late years had been established .... Their influence had not touched the chop-houses, and it required another quarter of a century before their cheeful and hospitable roofs and the old taverns of London... yielded to the gradually increasing but irresistable influence. (p.84; my underlining)

> At this time London was a very dull city, instead of being, as it is now, a very amusing one.... The middle classes, half a century ago, had little distraction from their monotonous toil and melancholy anxieties. (p.86)

> The turf at that time had not developed into that vast institution of national demoralisation which it now exhibits. (p.92)

> Forty years ago the great financiers had not that commanding, not to say predominant, position in society which they possess at present. (p.163)

> Lancashire was not so wonderful a place forty years ago as it is at present, but, compared then with the rest of England, it was infinitely more striking. (p.273)

> "In short, in these days it is no longer possible to step into parliament as if you were stepping into a club." (p.315)

> Going to Hurstley now was not so formidable an affair as it was in Endymion's boyhood. Then the journey occupied a whole and wearisome day. Little Hurstley

> had become a busy station of the great Slap-Bang railway, and a despatch train landed you at the bustling and flourishing hostelry, our old and humble friend, the Horse Shoe, within two hours. (p.407)

Disraeli is quite happy to provide actual instances. If he argues that in the 1830s, "those vast and successful invasions of society by new classes which have since occurred, though impending, had not yet commenced. The manufacturers, the railway kings... had not yet found their place in society and the senate" (p.23), then during the course of the novel he will show it occurring: Mr. Vigo, the Rodneys, Thornberry - manufacturers and railway kings - find their way both into society and into Parliament.

One ought to look in more detail at the medieval tournament in Endymion. One might imagine that a nostalgic Tory would idealize such a revival of the chivalric past (as Disraeli did with the Christmas festivities in Coningsby). But he firmly places the tournament in a contemporary context. "[A]ll contiguous Britain intended to repair [to the tournament] for irrespective of the railroads, which now began sensibly to affect the communications in the North of England, steamers were chartering from every port" (p.257), and at the ball after the jousting, "All who had taken part in the pageant retained their costumes, and the ordinary guests, if they yielded to mediaeval splendour, successfully asserted the taste of Paris" (p.265). It is simultaneously an acknowledgement of the past, and of how different contemporary society is; indeed there is even a suggestion of further change when Florestan says, "'enjoyment of the present is consistent with objects for the future'" (p.259). If that were not adequately revealed in the

chapters describing the tournament, it is made obvious immediately afterwards when Wilton tells Endymion,"'it occurred to me more than once during that wondrous pageant... [that] the government wants better information than they have as to the state of the country'" (p.272), and sends him to Lancashire to study industrial conditions and learn what must be done for England's future.

Lord Montfort shows "playful malice" in pointing out that "the chronology [of the tournament]... was confused" (p.256), which along with the petty personal jealousies that soon surface, emphasizes that there is no suggestion that the recreation of a mythical past will be useful to contemporary England. In exactly the same way that Waldershare's Young England opinions are not taken seriously, neither is the tournament. Its function is to extend the range of historical references. One should not think that by drawing the reader's attention to the essentially frivolous manner in which his characters treat the past Disraeli is condemning them. The progression of English history from chivalry to industrialisation is a continuous force, and the recognition of historical change is evident in the characters' consciously anachronistic recreation of the past. Their acceptance of change implies as favourable a future for them as Mr. Ferrars's rejection of change in the opening chapter heralded his downfall.

Disraeli accepts that occasionally there will be revolution: "The darkest hour precedes the dawn, and a period of unusual

stillness often, perhaps usually, heralds the social convulsion" (p.24). The word "usually" shows how normal the notion of revolution is - it becomes quite common as the novel progresses. Florestan, although a rightful heir, is described early in his career as belonging to one of the "revolutionary dynasties" (p.243), though later, after his accession, he is specially categorized as not being "a revolutionary and parvenu sovereign" (p.405). Count Ferroll believes "that even revolutions were for the future to be controlled by diplomacy" (p.237). When "The protectionist ministry [intends] to remain in office, and to repeal the corn laws," it is described as "the contemplated revolution in policy" (p.382). Even St. Barbe and the Hainaults have their characteristic comments to make. St. Barbe envies the power that women have in social climbing:

> "a woman dances at a ball with some young fellow or other, or sits next to some old fellow at dinner and pretends she thinks him charming, and he makes her a peeress on the spot. Oh! it is a disgusting world; it must end in revolution." (pp.224-5)

Looking at the array of jewels which have been given to his daughter as wedding gifts, Lord Hainault says, "'When the revolution comes... Lord Waldershare and my daughter must turn jewellers. Their stock in trade is ready'" (p.451).

The 1832 Reform Act is the principal example of "revolution" on the home front. Zenobia tries to stop it: "through all these tempestuous times Zenobia never quailed, though mobs burnt the castles of dukes and the palaces of bishops" (p.34), but her attitude to change is hardly one which the reader can be expected to admire. She is delighted by the news that gas

lighting has not been extended to Grosvenor Square, and horrified by the growing disuse of sedan chairs. More and more, however, to describe the Reform Act as a revolution becomes the norm. Mr. Ferrars consoles his wife, "'We are the victims of a revolution and we must bear our lot as becomes us under the circumstances. Individual misfortunes are merged in the greater catastrophe of the country" (p.40). The narrator confirms this opinion in a manner with which we have become accustomed in other novels: "There is nothing more remarkable in political history than the sudden break-up of the Whig party after their successful revolution of 1832" (p.55). The Rodneys constantly mimic the attitudes of the Ferrars: "The sight of their former master, who, had it not been for the revolution, might have been Prime Minister... quite overwhelmed them" (p.69). Endymion also accepts this view as normal, speaking of his father as one who "though the victim of a revolution, had not disgraced himself" (p.78), and later discussing what would have happened "'Had there been no revolution in 1832'" (p.417).

Abroad, the events in France, from the French Revolution onwards, provide another source of "revolutionary" material. Zenobia always fears the worst. The Whigs "'would have made us the slaves of Bonaparte'" (p.6), "'if they had had their way we should have been wearing sabots at this time, with a French prefect probably in Holland House'" (p.26). Since our cautious hero is himself a Whig, these excesses are as ridiculous in the context of the whole novel as are Zenobia's opinions of progress. They are, however, echoed by her protegé, Mr. Ferrars, whose political compositions include "sarcasms against the illiterate

and... invectives against the low... descriptions of the country life of the aristocracy contrasted with the horrors of the guillotine" (p.48). Another viewpoint is put by Waldershare, however, who believes that "The French Revolution had introduced the cosmopolitan principle into human affairs instead of the national, and no public man could succeed who did not comprehend and acknowledge that truth" (p.105). For the Neuchatels (to be ennobled as Hainault) the French Revolution was beneficial:

> When the great French Revolution occurred, all the emigrants deposited their jewels and their treasure with the Neuchatels. As the disturbances spread, their example was followed by the alarmed proprietors and capitalists of the rest of Europe.... [T]hey were doubtless repaid for their vigilance... by the opportunities which these rare resources permitted them to enjoy.[25] (pp.129-30)

It is the financial aspect of the French Revolution over which Myra and Endymion disagree. The latter claims that "'the states of the finances had something to do with the French Revolution,'" whereas Myra rather sweepingly asserts that "'The French Revolution was founded on nonsense - on the rights of man; when all sensible people in every country are now agreed, that man has no rights whatever'" (p.340).

The events in France in 1830 when Louis Philippe was elected King after Charles X's abdication are also considered to be a revolution. Three members of the Neuchatel family are elected to Parliament (as Whigs) in the 1831 general

25. We may also recall that the French Revolution brought "its huge quota to the elevation" of Tancred's ancestors (p.9).

election, soon after "the second French Revolution of 1830, which had been so fatal to Mr. Ferrars" (p.131). Notice here how Disraeli introduces, seemingly unnecessarily, the figure of Endymion's father, so that the year of 1830 can be seen in a triple light: a revolution in France, the beginning of the political rise of the Neuchatels and the beginning of the decline of the Ferrars. When Endymion himself goes to France he meets the men who rose with Louis Philippe. There is a similar emphasis on both rise and fall. Endymion met men

> who had been suddenly borne to high places by the revolutionary wave of 1830, and who had justly retained their exalted posts when so many competitors with an equal chance had long ago, with equal justice, subsided into the obscurity from which they ought never to have emerged. Around these chief personages were others not less distinguished by their abilities, but a more youthful generation, who knew how to wait, and were always prepared or preparing for the inevitable occasion when it arrived. (pp.329-30; my underlining)

1848, of course, is described in the same way: "The year rolled on, an agitated year of general revoltuion.... [E]very day brought great events, fresh insurrections, new constitutions, changes of dynasties, assassinations of ministers, states of siege, evanescent empires, and premature republics" (p.393).

The novel contains five principal notions of how change occurs: providence, reaction, will, destiny and chance. First providence: Lady Montfort is "glad that there is something... which is inevitable'" (p.387), and the archbishop, Penruddock, traces

> "the hand of Providence in every incident of [Endymion's] sister's life. What we deemed misfortunes, sorrows, even calamities, were forming a character... destined for the highest purposes.... Our great Master was... shaping everything to His ends, and preparing for the entrance into His Church of a woman who may be, who will be, I believe, another St. Helena." (pp.429-30)

But this simple attitude is not allowed to stand unchallenged. The inevitability which Lady Montfort seems to be welcoming is imminent political chaos in Europe, and the Archbishop's opinion is immediately attacked by Endymion; not long afterwards, when the former says, "'The time will come when you will recognize it as the consummation of a Divine plan,'" he retorts, "'I feel great confidence that my sister will never be the slave of superstition!" (p.430).

The second attitude to change, reaction, is advanced more frequently. It too does not escape unscathed. Zenobia is the prime source for the idea:"'What I want you to see... is that reaction is the law of life, and that we are on the eve of a great reaction'" (p.5-6). When Mrs. Ferrars argues that "'There must be a reaction'" (p.40) or finds "a never-failing resource in her conviction of a coming reaction" (p.55), it is Zenobia she is echoing. Although Zenobia is the main originator of such remarks, other characters provide some support for her. When Mr. Ferrars's fellow travellers discuss politics on his trip back to London in 1834 to attempt to regain his lost position, one of them "modestly intimated that he thought there was a decided reaction" (p.62); Bertie Tremaine speaks of "'this great Tory reaction'" (p.346); but equally, earlier he had castigated "the nonsense called Conservative Reaction'" (p.161), and

Waldershare joins in the criticism of the whole concept when he says that when Peel "'failed in '34 they said there had not been sufficient time for the reaction to work. Well, now, since then, it has had nearly three years... and yet they have given you a [Liberal] majority'" (p.174). More tellingly, however, just as Zenobia's opinions on progress condemn her attitude to revolution, so the fact that she is so often wrong condemns her belief in reaction. What Disraeli approves of is development, from the duties of chivalry to the new duties imposed by industrialization, not a mechanical and cynical alternation of power.

There are certain attitudes towards change which the book takes more seriously, though even they are not allowed to stand unchallenged. The most obvious is the impact that the will can make on events, an idea which especially belongs to Myra, though it is not new in Disraeli's writings. (In Venetia, Cardurcis asks himself, "what was character? It must be will; and his will was violent and firm" (p.193).) Like Zenobia's opinions on reaction, Myra's on will are echoed by minor characters. Of Seymour Hicks we are told, "what he really owed his social advancement to was his indomitable will" (p.247), and of Reginald Sutton that "he was a determined young hero... and was a votary of the great theory that all in life was an affair of will, and that endowed with sufficient energy he might marry whom he liked" (p.261). As, despite his signal determination, he does not marry her, the theory of will takes something of a knock.

Myra, as we shall see, also does not achieve all she sets out to, but her career is based on her belief in will. She becomes a free agent with her father's death and it is then that she says, "'if my will is concentrated on one purpose, it must ultimately effect it. That is my creed... and I hold it fervently'" (p.129). She too, like Zenobia, influences people. Lady Montfort connects Myra with the idea of will when she plans to join her in schemes for Endymion's advancement:

> "The thing must be done, I am now going to your sister, to consult with her. All you have got to do is to make up your mind that you will be in the next parliament, and you will succeed; for everything in this world depends upon will." (p.293)

As the novel progresses, Lady Montfort comes more and more to take Myra's place as Endymion's patron until eventually we read,

> There is nothing like will; everybody can do exactly what they like in this world, provided they really like it. Sometimes they think they do, but in general, it is a mistake. Lady Montfort, it seemed, was a woman who always could do what she liked. She could do what she liked with Endymion Ferrars; that was quite certain. (pp.451-2)

The position of the narrator in this passage is rather elusive. He begins by asserting that "There is nothing like will," but then becomes less certain: perhaps if people really want to do something they might achieve it. In the third sentence, Lady Montfort only "seemed" like a woman who could do what she liked, and finally all the narrator will commit himself to is that she can make the man who loves her do what she likes. This

last is a commonplace far removed from the positive assertion at the beginning of the quotation. Disraeli allows his characters to believe uncritically in the power of will, but one must not imagine that the narrative texture supports such a position.

It is not only in opinions that the idea of will enters the book, but through the events themselves. Myra's first marriage is largely brought about because of her desire to assist her brother: "'I see a career, ay, and a great one; and what is far more important, I see a career for you'" (p.198). It is her influence which gains Endymion his position with Sidney Wilton. When Endymion is an M.P. he can meet all the important menin Europe because "The brother-in-law of Lord Roehampton was a sort of personage" (p.331). It is Roehampton who gives Endymion the opportunity to question the government on foreign affairs, which is the beginning of his parliamentary career. When Roehampton opportunely moves to the House of Lords, Endymion has "to represent the Foreign Office in the House of Commons" (p.386). When Myra becomes a Queen she gives Endymion "'her mansion and the whole of her income'" (p.427).

Myra recognizes a similar spirit to her own in Florestan, then known to her as Colonal Albert. She does not merely tender her good wishes that his plans should succeed, she says, "'I will more than wish.... I will believe that they will succeed, because I think you have resolved to succeed'" (p.155). It would seem that there is one difference between them. Though

Albert (Florestan) is determined to succeed, he is also confident that he will:

> "I am the child of destiny.... That destiny will again place me on the throne of my fathers. That is as certain as I am now speaking to you. But destiny for its fulfilment ordains action. Its decrees are inexorable, but they are obscure...." (p.180)

In some ways this relieves him of the burden of worry which Myra feels for her brother: "'I was not thinking of my kingdom. I leave that to fate; I believe it is destined to be mine, and therefore occasions me thought but not anxiety'" (p.259). Again, Disraeli has embodied support for this fourth concept in the book's action. Florestan does recover his throne. Though Sidney Wilton says to him, "'I really do not understand what destiny means.... I understand what conduct means, and I recognize that it should be regulated by truth and honour'" (pp.180-1), Wilton's own impeccable behaviour does not win him Myra. Florestan's belief in destiny does.

Destiny also is not a new idea in Disraeli's writing. Contarini Fleming affirmed, "I believe in that Destiny before which the ancients bowed," but he went on to add, "Destiny is our will, and our will is our nature.... All is mystery; but he is a slave who will not struggle to penetrate the dark veil" (p.326). Florestan's assertion of his destiny continues, "'Its decrees are inexorable, but they are obscure, and the being whose career it directs is as a man travelling in a dark night; he reaches his goal even without the aid of stars or moon'" (p.180). Though both Fleming and Florestan agree that the actual means by which one's destiny is achieved are mysterious,

Fleming seems to equate character with will, and both in turn with destiny, in a way that Florestan does not. Yet, when Myra comments that his plans are bound to succeed, "'because I think you have resolved to succeed,'" Florestan's reply, that she "'is the only person who had read my character'" (p.155), would seem to confirm a similar connection between character, will and destiny.

There is an important passage at the end of Ch. LXVII in which attitudes to change confront one another, just as Coningsby had to confront his grandfather, and Lothair his revolutionary and Catholic selves. Endymion had decided that he cannot afford to stand for Parliament, and Myra feels that she has failed him:

> "My dream was to secure you greatness, and now, when the first occasion arrives, it seems I am more than powerless.... I fancied, with my affection and my will, I could command events, and place you on a pinnacle. I see my folly now.... [I] had confidence in you, and confidence in your star; and because, like an idiot, I had schooled myself to believe that, if I devoted my will to you, that star would triumph." (pp.302-3)

Myra here is making no distinction between her will and his star, and she continues to conflate the two: "'I ought not to have rested until you were in a position which would have made you masterof your destiny.'" Endymion recognizes the untenable nature of her position - "'But if there should be such a thing as destiny, it will not submit to the mastery of man.'" Myra's reply confirms that, like Florestan, she does think the two things the same: "'Do not split words with me; you know what I mean; you feel what I mean; I mean much more than I say, and you understand much more than I say'" (p.303). Her anger is

not occasioned solely at Endymion's refusal to forward his career, nor at his criticism of the vagaries of her philosophical stance, but more importantly at his refusal to understand what this frustration of her plans means for her whole attitude to life. If the power of her will cannot get Endymion to stand for Parliament, let alone win him a seat, surely she is right to say "'I have failed in life'" (p.302). Endymion only knows that Myra was "deeply wounded... and he somehow the cause" (p.304).

Having taken the overt argument to this point, Disraeli then dramatizes the next step. Endymion <u>does</u> stand for Parliament at that election and what makes it possible is the mysterious gift of £20,000, the most extreme example of chance in the novel. Is pure chance, then, an explanation of change which the novel endorses, or, since the means that destiny uses are both a "mystery" and "obscure," should the gift be regarded as a means of furthering his destiny? If the latter, then destiny can exist without the supporting concepts of will and character. Within the one chapter Disraeli has both argued and dramatized the conflicting claims of will, chance and destiny, but as is his wont, without choosing between them.

Change, will, destiny, success, failure, providence, chance, revolution and reaction make up the vocabulary of <u>Endymion</u> and the connections between them are its subject. To say with Monypenny and Buckle that "the dominant idea in <u>Endymion</u> is the enormous, indeed decisive, important influence of women

in directing and moulding the life of man, and, particularly, political man," is a gross over-simplification.[26] Disraeli always had paid great attention to the influence of women. In Coningsby he wrote, "Women are the Priestesses of Predestination. Man conceives Fortune, but Woman conducts it. It is the Spirit of Man that says, 'I will be great'; but it is the Sympathy of Woman that usually makes him so" (p.153), and later, "There is no end to the influence of woman on our life. It is at the bottom of everything that happens to us" (p.431). To Lady Bradford in May 1875 he wrote, "I owe everything to women.... I require sympathy... but male sympathy does not suit me."[27] It is also true that the strength, influence and importance of women have progessively increased throughout Disraeli's fiction; and that in Endymion, the hero himself says, "'I think everything in this world depends upon woman'" (p. 293), and muses, "women would be his best friends in life!" (p.306). But St. Barbe is there so to overstate the case as to demolish it: "'I never had a sister; I never had any luck in life at all. I wish I had been a woman. Women are the only people who get on'" (p.224). In Endymion Myra is nearly the only woman who embodies such strength of will. To say with a reviewer than the "sentiments of Myra are the inspiring sentiments of the novel"[28] is incorrect. They are only one part of a much more complex structure.

Many of the women in the novel are actually figures of fun, much more like Lady St. Jerome than Theodora or Sybil.

26. Monypenny and Buckle, II.1426.

27. Zetland, I.14.

28. Fraser's Magazine, op.cit., p.715.

Zenobia's ridiculous attitudes to change and the French have already been commented upon, but she is also capable of causing real harm: "Mr. Ferrars, mainly under the advice of Zenobia, resigned his office when Mr. Canning was appointed Minister, and cast in his lot with the great destiny of the Duke of Wellington" (pp.10-11). This of course was the first step on his downward path. (Notice also the wry questioning of the validity of destiny at this early stage of the novel.) Lady Hainault's role has also been mentioned, and even Berengaria is not immune from being laughed at, with her ridiculous notions: "'And then our bad harvests. Why, that is the very reason we shall have an excellent harvest this year. You cannot go on always having bad harvests'" (p.288) - though even here the book's concern with change is reinforced. When Lord Houghton wrote, "It is impossible to throw off the impression of a secret satire pervading all the complimentary phraseology and brilliant colouring,"[29] he was quite right, and much of that humour is at the expense of the women.

Endymion himself is a very different matter. Critical opinion has been almost unanimous. Fraser's Magazine felt that Myra dominated the book, that "Endymion is never really the chief figure."[30] The Dial was even more sweeping: Endymion "has in effect no plot and no characters.... As for Endymion and Myra, the one is uninteresting and both impossible."[31]

29. Lord Houghton, p.72.

30. Fraser's Magazine, op.cit., p.710.

31. Fuller, pp.188-9.

Lord Houghton said that Endymion "is a nullity through the first and second volumes, with a fantastic mission to be something very great in the third,"[32] and Monypenny and Buckle call him "colourless and insipid."[33] Maitre swells the chorus, calling Endymion "le roman disraélien où le héros est le moins ambitieux, le moins volontaire et le plus souple aux volontés extérieures (sutout féminines)."[34] Such judgements are a little harsh. Because of his early experiences, Endymion is naturally cautious and, like all Disraeli's heroes, he is young. However, while more than a nullity, it is true that he is not a character study of any depth. What has not been adequately recognized is how much it is his role to be passive. Consider the subjects of the novel: chance, will, destiny, revolution, etc. If destiny is a valid concept then nothing is necessary for Endymion but belief; if will, then Myra will provide it; if chance, revolution, providence or reaction, then nothing he could do would alter them. Endymion's passivity allows all the subjects to remain in play. This, of course, is why there is no place for a Sidonia, an Angel, or a Paraclete in this novel. The central forces at work in the book are revealed both in the opinions of the characters, their vocabulary and by the very events of Endymion's life. There is no need for a sage to pronounce on the Spirit of the Age, Will or Destiny.

I have noted earlier that the passivity of the hero and a sense of inevitability go together: that the less certain the hero is, the more convinced the women around him become. One

32. Lord Houghton, p.67.

33. Monypenny and Buckle, II.1429.

34. Maitre, p.117.

of the futures which they offer him is the right one for him and since Disraeli sees his choice as inevitable, his role is merely to be tempted by them all and finally choose, or be chosen by, the correct one. In many ways this is true of Endymion: "Here were three women, young, beautiful, and powerful, and all friends of Endymion - real friends" (pp.293-4). The three women are, of course, his sister Myra, Adriana Neuchatel, and Lady Montfort. Endymion's relationships with them alter as the book progresses, adding another comment on the question of change with which the book deals.

Endymion and Myra are Disraelian doubles; they are, of course, twins. Myra says, "'There is a mystic bond between us originating, perhaps, in the circumstance of our birth'" (p.118). She tells Endymion, "'You are myself'" (p.198), and "'[I am] your twin, half of your blood and life'" (p.437). Nor does she think that their being twins was an accident: "'We must never forget the great object for which we two live, for which, I believe, we were born twins - to rebuild our house'" (p.343).

While Endymion performs well everything that he is asked to do, he initiates nothing. Myra finds herself a job, while he accepts the one his father obtained for him. She makes a good marriage to improve their position, while he spends much of the novel refusing to propose to Adriana Neuchatel. Myra obtains for him the position of Sidney Wilton's secretary; he accepts and works well at it. The contrast is continuous. She is representing the power of the will as the means by which destiny is achieved, he the preparedness and acceptance of that destiny;

thus two of the book's central concepts are constantly before the reader and are constantly contrasted.

The woman who takes over Myra's role is Lady Montfort, and there is a striking similarity between them. Lady Montfort had plans for Lord Roehampton to marry Adriana Neuchatel, and is put out when he chooses Myra. Myra has plans for Endymion to marry Adriana and is put out when he prefers Lady Montfort. Both Myra and Lady Montfort marry twice, the first time for practical reasons (and each makes a success of it) and the second time for love. Myra's plans to get Endymion into Parliament are thwarted, then immediately realized by Adriana's gift of £20,000; Lady Montfort's plans to have Endymion returned for the family borough are thwarted when Lord Montfort's influence is superseded by that of Lord Beaumaris. Almost immediately, however, the object is achieved when Lord Beaumaris agrees not to contest Endymion's candidacy. This has been brought about by his wife, Imogene, with whom Endymion had once fancied himself in love. Myra's disappointment occurs in Ch. LXVII and Lady Montfort's in Ch. LXVIII: it is impossible that they should not be compared. When therefore Lady Montfort takes Myra's place as Endymion's inspiration, she too has been involved in an incident in which the conflicting claims of will, chance and destiny to rule events have been dramatized. The central confrontation has been repeated.

There is one difference between the two women, however: Myra cannot persuade Endymion to marry Adriana, but Lady Montfort does propose to Endymion and is accepted. The library shelves

in her new house "'are empty,... but the volumes to fill them are already collected. Yes.... If you will deign to accept it, this is the chamber I have prepared for you'" (p.454). Myra had wanted to mould his fortunes; Lady Montfort will actually be able to: "What would be the result of this irresistable influence upon him? Would it make or mar those fortunes that once seemed so promising?" (p.452; my underlining).

There has been a general critical belief that Endymion is an amoral book inasmuch as it seems to come to no obvious moral conclusion. Monypenny and Buckle quote an entry from Archbishop Tait's diary: "I have finished Endymion with a painful feeling that the writer considers all political life as mere play and gambling"; and Lord Houghton wrote, "There will, no doubt, be some reproach that this is a political novel without political principles, and a picture of success in life without ethical considerations."[35] Both writers, like many others, have paid undue importance to only part of the book's overall pattern and then sought for a pat moral, which is almost entirely absent. One can find examples of such a cynical or amoral approach: "'The wheel will turn and bring round our friends again'" (p.40), "'The wheel of Fortune turns round very strangely'" (p.165), "'life is a masquerade'" (p.258), "'The world is a wheel, and it will all come round right'" (p.317), "'Real politics are the possession and distribution of power'" (p.326), "'Great men should think of Opportunity, and not of Time'" (p.381), "Lord Roehampton's saying, that there was no gambling like politics" (p.382), or "'I will not decide what

35. Monypenny and Buckle, II.1440; Lord Houghton, p.76.

are great ends; I am content to ascertain what is wise conduct'" (p.430). This is not, however, the novel's main tone, nor has enough attention been given to the fact that all these are remarks made by fictional characters not the political creed of a Prime Minister.

While I do not think that Disraeli at all saw his task as the propagation of a simple morality, there is one area of the book where one could argue that a moral stand is taken. Myra tries continuously to make Endymion marry Adriana Neuchatel for her money, and equally consistently he refuses. This is not to imply that the novel in any way condemns Myra or Lady Montfort for marrying without love. In both cases there is respect and affection:

> Myra... had never had a romance of the heart.... When she married... nothing could exceed the tenderness and affectionate gratitude.... But it was not in the nature of things that she could experience those feelings which still echo in the heights of Meilleraie, and compared with which all the glittering accidents of fortune sink into insignificance. (p.393)

These "glittering accidents of fortune" are the book's main theme, but here Disraeli is assuring us that love is more important. Myra marries Florestan and can no longer assist Endymion's career. As Mrs. Ferrars said, when finally made to realize the extent of her husband's ruin, "'O William! if we love each other, what does anything signify?'" (p.40). Lord Houghton was wrong, I think, to believe that "there never was a novel with so little love and with so many proposals of marriage, marriages and re-marriages."[36] Eventually all the major

36. Lord Houghton, p.71.

characters marry for love and there is comment in praise of romance throughout the book. The Earl of Roehampton is "romantic" (p.168) and recognized as such by Lady Montfort. Annoyed by his marriage to Myra she becomes resigned: "'Well, we must put the best face upon it.... [H]e was always romantic'" (p.199). Endymion knows that his prudence in refusing to stand for Parliament is "'not very romantic, I own'" (p.299), and later when he does decide to stand he says, "'The change in my life I was alluding to is one by no means of a romantic character. I have some thoughts of trying my luck on the hustings'" (p.314). And yet, all this time, his inner imaginings are rather different: "it was a dream of fair women, and even fairer thoughts, domestic tenderness and romantic love" (p.306).

All this may suggest that if Endymion has a moral, it is encompassed in a quotation from Venetia: "'After all, the end of all our exertions is to be happy at home; that is the end of everything'" (p.263), or, as Endymion himself thinks (perhaps explaining why there are none of the significant descriptions of places, houses or estates which we have become so used to in Disraeli's novels),

> Property does not consist merely of parks and palaces broad acres, funds in many forms, services of plate, and collections of pictures. The affections of the heart areproperty, and the sympathy of the right person is often worth a good estate. (p.294)

But before we settle too easily for this happy moral, we must remember such arguments as these:

> "You say you have a deep and sincere regard for Adriana.... Why, what better basis for enduring happiness can there be? You are not a man to marry for romantic sentiment, and pass your life in writing sonnets to your wife till you find her charms and your inspiration alike exhausted; you are already wedded to the State." (p.381)

They gain validity by the presence in the novel of two marriages, originally loveless, which bring great happiness, and that, even after her own love-match, Myra can still try to persuade Endymion, "'I know you think your heart belongs to another....[Y]ou delight in her society; such things have happened before to many men... but that has not prevented them from being wise, and very happy too'" (p.438). What is more, by making her love-match one that also brings her almost incredible prosperity, Disraeli has laid it open to being regarded as the most extreme example of her good luck, rather than an instance of love conquering all. If Lord Montfort had not died (the news reaches Myra and Endymion in the middle of the conversation quoted above), and had he not left everything to his wife, one cannot be certain whether Endymion's own marriage would have taken place; it too depends on chance. Nor should it be thought that by these happy chances Disraeli has somehow been avoiding the issue. At the same time that he is refusing to give the book a simple moral, he is insisting that the reader consider the relationship of love and chance: this latter being one of the book's primary concerns. As he says, with such marvellous verve, "one is at last forced to believe that there is some miraculous and supernatural agency that provides the ever-enduring excitement and ceaseless incidents of grace and beauty " (p.433).

CONCLUSION

Disraeli was never a writer who had only one thing to say: typically he had two or more. Often the things he wanted to incorporate in his fiction would have seemed mutually exclusive to his contemporaries. A study of his novels, from 1826 to 1880, reveals that the principal development of his skill was in ways which allowed him to include within one work multiple interpretations of his subject.

The basic structure which he uses depends on symmetry, whose essential function was to facilitate comparison. The parallel proposal scenes in Venetia - the first ending with the suitor hurling imprecations on the head of Venetia's father and the second on that of her mother - reveal the change in the suitor's own beliefs; the rival "miracles" performed in Rome in Lothair are a later example. The "ghost" of the revolutionary Theodora may well have reappeared in Rome to warn Lothair against joining the Roman Catholic Church, and the Virgin Mary, it is claimed, had earlier appeared to ensure his medical treatment, a "miracle" which almost results in Lothair being received into the Church. This comparison is rather more complex,

for it illustrates not only different sides of the hero's character, but the different attitudes of the two rival philosophies which are soliciting his support. The greater complexity of the comparison is appropriate for the later, more mature novel, but its roots are apparent in Venetia.

One particular type of symmetry which also becomes more complex is "doubles." At its simplest this consists of two characters between whom comparisons are especially significant - for example the brothers Honain and Jabaster in Alroy, the Hatton brothers in Sybil, or the twins Myra and Endymion in Endymion. It is clear from the dates of these instances, 1833, 1845 and 1880, that doubling remained a constant technique throughout Disraeli's fiction, but more complex examples increased in importance in the later novels. In Sybil, for example, the aristocratic Egremont becomes Mr. Franklin and lives among the working classes for a time, and Sybil thinks herself a member of the working classes but is finally revealed to be an aristocrat. Thus the hero and heroine both have double roles to play and in doing so illustrate the argument of the book, that the two nations are actually one.

It is not difficult to see the connection between Sybil, where two characters each with double identities extend the notion of national division and ultimate unification, and another development of Disraeli's art, which is for the characters not only to embody but themselves to offer conflicting visions of the novel's subject. An early example comes from Venetia where at a critical moment Lady Annabel Herbert

and her daughter Venetia discuss the abortive reunion with Marmion Herbert, completely at cross purposes. In the process the reader is made aware of conflicting attitudes towards pride and marriage and a clash of loyalties which the characters are not able to discuss directly. Lady Annabel is torn between her duty as a mother to encourage her daughter's reconciliation to the father and her repugnance as a wife for the same man. Venetia herself not only owes duties to each parent but has come to believe that she must respect her father's assumed loyalty to his mistress. In a similar incident Tancred is torn between his love for Eva and his loyalty to the Ansarey Queen and finally fights alongside the latter against forces which have come to rescue Eva, something he had hoped to do himself. The two sides of Tancred's character, attracted by opposing forces, are shown to be at odds. In this weak novel, however, Disraeli cannot sustain the continuing opposition and has Tancred commit himself to one side. In Lothair's central confrontation with Cardinal Grandison, however, Disraeli does achieve a perfect balance. Lothair knows the extent of his previous military commitment to the revolutionaries, reads the newspaper account of his spiritual commitment to the Roman Catholics, and is told by the Cardinal to trust the authority of the Church and not his memory. The great advance over Tancred is that the thematic importance of this central confrontation is recognised and discussed openly. The contrasting sides of Lothair's character are now as clear as Egremont's relationship to Mr. Franklin, but their unity within the one character is more completely achieved.

Even more subtle is the "double" relationship between Myra and her twin Endymion. Their kinship is stressed, but Endymion's passivity in accepting his destiny is at odds with Myra's insistence on the power of her will to achieve it. In a central scene in which they are at variance, his firm action (refusing to stand for Parliament) invalidates both the philosophy by which he lives and the one which she espouses. Neither of the characters is really aware of the meaning of their confrontation but the entire argument of the novel has not merely been illustrated (as it was by the double natures of the hero and heroine in Sybil) but advanced another step by the most sophisticated use of a pair of Disraelian "doubles" at cross purposes.

As well as using the idea of doubles in his characters, Disraeli increasingly offers his readers a structural duality of vision. The simplest early example is in Alroy where the florid flourishes of the rhetoric rest upon eighty-two footnotes which constitute a factual and scholarly basis for the story and the traditions within it. If one moves between the two there is a constant comparison between romance and a kind of realism. The use of a central parallel is not new to Disraeli's work (after all the relationship between Coningsby and the "new" Tory party creates the entire structure of that novel), but what is new is to use a central contrast to provide two versions of the events with which Disraeli is dealing. The central contrast in Coningsby produces only one explanation of the central theme, that in Alroy offers two. Lothair and Endymion extend the pattern found in Alroy. The former contains warring

philosophies: revolutionary, Roman Catholic, pagan and Anglican. Their respective representatives, Theodora, Clare Arundel and the Roman Catholic clerics, Mr. Phoebus and his family, and Corisande, all exist in the same world. They can meet socially and provide conflicting interpretations of what has occurred. Lothair's coming-of-age celebration is a case in point. Everyone is there and everyone contributes his or her characteristic interpretation of the occasion. In Endymion the same pattern is present, though somewhat less explicit. Though most of the characters do announce their beliefs (in will, destiny, providence, etc.) the book as a whole incorporates examples and illustrations of additional abstract concepts, such as luck, good fortune, chance and change.

There are clear developments in Disraeli's writing which make possible the change from simple contrast to the presentation of a profusion of attitudes. One involves the narrator and the narrative voice. The first suggestion of how important the narrative voice was to be for Disraeli comes in The Young Duke where a "double" relationship exists between the hero and the narrator. The narrator functions as a fictional author, his writing career, retirement to Rome and other personal details are sketched in, and the comparison of his opinions and beliefs with those of the protagonist makes a positive contribution to the book's argument that even the dissolute can become responsible citizens. A year later, the narrator and protagonist are one: Contarini Fleming is written in the first person, and the conflicting, almost schizoid attitudes of the hero produce a commentary on the relationship of private fantasy to public

duty. Although after these two novels the narrator never has such a dominant position, he does remain a presence.

In Sybil the narrator's function is exaggerated by the novel's praise of knowledge and emphasis on the ubiquity of ignorance: and what the narrator knows best in this fictional world is historical facts. From Vivian Grey onwards Disraeli's novels contain a ground base of documentary facts and historical narrative, and progressively emphasis comes to lie on those facts which the audience could recognise, thus establishing another series of comparisons. Though the facts cannot be denied, Disraeli's interpretation of them may be.

Such a denial, however, is not easy. The narrator's own opinions, indeed on occasions his very words, are echoed by characters and thus achieve an odd status somewhere between factual opinion and fictional assertion. This remains true whether it is a character from Sybil echoing the narrator's assertions of the bestial life lived by the working classes, or the narrator and the hero in Tancred having identical opinions about the supreme importance of Jewish law to English society.

Disraeli also employs "types" who blur the boundaries between factual reporting and fictional creation even further. The two best known are, of course, Tadpole and Taper, but there are many others who appear in both the documentary parts of novels (because they are not truly individualized) and in the more truly fictional parts (because they are not completely

stereotyped). Historical, documentary evidence to support Disraeli's thesis is thus constantly brought to the reader's attention as the types introduce evidence from the documentary sections into the fictional world.

The fluctuating balance between factual and fictional truths is intimately connected with the question of Disraeli's style. What first appears in Contarini Fleming as a fluctuation in the hero/narrator's mind between public duty and private fantasy, and later is seen in the balance between factual reporting and fictional creation, comes to be a constant movement between attitudes of mockery and fervour: another example of Disraeli's characteristic ability to present conflicting attitudes.

Coningsby suggests that the ideals of Young England constitute an attitude of mind which could provide the solution to the political problems of the day. Yet, while the Christmas festivities and the almsgiving are enthusiastically and earnestly described, members of Coningsby's group of friends are laughed at for their commitment (albeit a somewhat exaggerated one) to similar beliefs. This novel contains only a modicum of such antithetical material, and what there is is largely achieved by maintaining a contrast between the speech of the enthusiasts (whose excesses constitute their own condemnation) and the narrative voice which supports comparable idealistic notions in a revered and archaic vocabulary.

It was through the vocabulary of each successive novel that Disraeli became progressively more capable of sustaining contraditions. Sybil is an important novel in this context;

it develops a thematically redolent vocabulary which, as we shall see later, helps embody the novel's argument, but at this stage Disraeli does not extend its use in balanced contradictions. Sybil is full of ignorance, especially revealed in the lack of names, misnaming, and naming by roles. Tancred also has a characteristic vocabulary; it is full of religious and racial definitions, often related to international comparisons. The same vocabulary serves both halves of the novel, and allows for both a mocking and a fervent tone, which do not however keep pace with one another. The former exists in the English half, the latter in the Palestinian, and the two halves of the book never react upon each other.

In Lothair, however, the vocabulary of "nature" is all-pervasive. It establishes the individual commitments of the characters and their relationships. It is so wide-ranging that within it different attitudes can be taken, while the network of relationships remains firm. Lady St. Jerome's reliance on her gardener, Theodora's preference for the natural countryside over parks, Corisande's recreation of a traditional English garden, all serve to illustrate the characters of the three women, but more than that: all three examples stress the importance of nature in a novel in which the hero is finally to commit himself to manage his vast estates. But their importance is even greater. From them spreads out a web of allusions: the natural religion of Theodora (comparable to Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism), the pagan religion with its natural divinities (espoused most of all by Mr. Phoebus), its relationship to

Madre Natura, the secret society's use of natural objects, the nurture of plants according to written sources (as examplified by the Roman Catholics) or traditionally (by Corisande), Corisande's gift of a rose to Lothair to seal their engagement and the patriotism that suggests, the comparison between such patriotism and the foreign entanglements that the Church of Rome and the Italian revolutionaries signify. The list of topics central to the novel and related through the concept of nature could be extended much further, but the range is wide enough to include both commitment and amusement. If Mr. Phoebus' views on the place of nature in the scheme of things are too extreme to be taken seriously, his wife and sister-in-law, less fanatical believers in the same creed, certainly play their part in Lothair's recovery.

The same pattern is found in Endymion. There the vocabulary is that of change: providence, reaction, will, good fortune, destiny, chance, all these words and many others related to the subject occur over and over again, and as in Lothair the range is wide, wide enough to allow Myra to insist on the force of will, and yet allow the narrative voice to query its validity in the case of her follower Lady Montfort; even to allow Bertie Tremaine both to espouse and reject the idea of reaction; to cast doubt on Penruddock's ideas of the providential gift of power by making him believe it alights on unlikely objects:

> "Lady Montfort is a great woman - a woman who could inspire crusades and create churches. She might, and she will, I trust, rank with the Helenas and the Matildas." Lord Montfort gave a little sound, but so gentle that it was heard probably but by himself, which in common language would be styled a whistle - an articulate modulation

> of the breath which in this instance expressed a sly sentiment of humorous amazement. (pp.262-3)

Disraeli never acknowledges such descrepancies as those between Penruddock's belief and Lord Montfort's disbelief, which can make his style very disconcerting. Like all the other contrasts in his fiction they are kept in play concurrently.

Yet it would not be accurate to imagine that Disraeli's novels contain an unco-ordinated welter of conflicting ideas. Each book has a central concern of which all the contrasts are constituent reflections, which produce a multi-faceted analysis of the central theme. Within Contarini Fleming's mind the rival demands of fantasy and duty are at war, but the entire novel presents a continuous assessment of their claims. In Venetia Marmion Herbert and Plantagenet Cardurcis are of different generations and have different histories, but by producing a composite analysis of their lives and their effect on the people around them, Disraeli describes the Romantic. The joint mockery and respect alloted to the Young England protagonists of Coningsby make up an intelligent appraisal of the phenomenon.

Disraeli's maturity as a writer in large part came with his development of techniques for contrast whose function was to incorporate diverse attitudes to the central theme into his fiction: symmetry, "doubles," misunderstandings, structural double versions, narrative voice, fictional/factual comparisons, the use of "types." His style of joint mockery and sincerity is another major factor in this achievement, but it is only possible

because it arises from vocabularies broad enough to contain conflicting attitudes without their undermining each other. The distinct vocabulary of key words, then, is part of the means of achieving the novel's unity, which forms the concomitant development of Disraeli's art.

It is important to have a proper understanding of what Disraeli was writing about. He almost always included a political aspect in his novels (Henrietta Temple is perhaps the only exception). But the more recognisably political nature of Coningsby, and to a lesser extent Sybil, have led some critics to believe that every Disraeli novel has (or should have) an overtly political subject, and in this they are wrong. What always interested Disraeli was the forces behind political change. Seen in this light, the need for and growth of a reformed political party (Coningsby) is no more or less political than the need for social change (Sybil), the influence on the country of spiritual awakening (Tancred) or nationalism (Lothair), or a consideration of historical change itself (Endymion). To define his subjects in this way also helps to reject the frequent demands that Disraeli should provide political solutions to the questions he raises. Very seldom does he raise specific questions; rather he is analyzing the forces behind the questions.

The analysis often produces different answers, all present in the same novel, but by stressing their inter-relatedness Disraeli never allows the central subject to slip through his

fingers. He shows especial skill in the way he dramatizes thematic conflict within the structure of his later novels. There are, of course, early hints of this development. The contrast between Vivian Grey and his "doubles," Mrs. Felix Lorraine and Beckendorff, shows attitudes of evil and benevolence, all potentially present in the same person; the symmetrical balancing of the engagements and re-engagements in Henrietta Temple produces a sympathetic consideration of love and remorse; the structural parallel between Coningsby and the "new" Tory party establishes the antecedents of both and the certainty of their success. But it is in Sybil that the dramatization of the central argument first becomes apparent, not only in its own right, as in Coningsby, but as part of an integrated whole. The very things which are part of the vocabulary, the language of "strangers," the emphasis on ignorance, the family trees, the lack of names, the misnaming, the naming by roles, the emphasis on recognition: such elements are brought into the structure of the novel when, for example, Egremont and Sybil have to acknowledge that they both have been living under assumed identities, or when Sybil rescues many of the Marney family by recognising their assailants, or when her father is killed because he is not recognized. Tancred does not achieve such structural cohesion, but even there the introduction of social occasions which illustrate cultural beliefs and the contrast of Eastern and European cultures, in a novel which deals with cultural reliance on spiritual concepts, is the only part of the novel which is fully achieved.

Disraeli's last two novels show his ability to dramatize

concepts at its best. The central confrontation between Lothair and the Cardinal has already been discussed as an example of the sophisticated use of doubles and of misunderstandings, but it is equally important to realize that through that scene Disraeli has established the novel's central question: what is the extent of Lothair's commitment to the revolutionaries and to the Roman Catholic Church? In the later account of his timorous return to England, Disraeli has embodied the parallel question of Lothair's commitment to England. In Endymion the constant reminder of historical change supports the characters' need to provide explanations for it; but more than that, the very plot extends the argument. Mr. Vigo's generosity in allowing Endymion unlimited credit, the gift of £20,000 and Lord Beaumaris' support of Endymion's Parliamentary candidacy, all provide for chance taking its place with will and destiny as part of the novel's philosophical framework. Yet since such good fortune is instrumental in the achievement of his position, it does not invalidate the idea of destiny, and since what both Myra and Lady Montfort desire for Endymion is achieved, how can the novel be said to counteract the force of will? Their inclusion has extended all the central concepts of the novel without invalidating any.

Assessments of Disraeli as a writer have generally been impaired by a knowledge of who he was and assumptions about what he believed. To look at reviews and criticism of Disraeli

(with such honourable exceptions as Leslie Stephen and John Holloway) is to discover his sporadic rediscovery, taking incomplete and unjust views. The major advantage gained by a consecutive study of Disraeli's works is that it shows how certain abilities were extended and developed, often at the expense of the more traditional novelist's strengths, such as realism or character study. The development resulted in simultaneous conflicting analyses of a central theme presented within a coherently achieved novel. It was not a form of novel-writing which was understood then, but nevertheless it is one which deserves recognition for its brilliance, its humour and above all the qualities F.R. Leavis once claimed for Disraeli:

> though he is not one of the great novelists, he is so alive and intelligent as to deserve permanent currency.... [H]is own interests as expressed in these books - the interests of a supremely intelligent politician who has a sociologist's understanding of civilization and its movement in his time - are so mature.[1]

1. F.R. Leavis, The Great Tradition (London, 1948), p.2-3n.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Works by Disraeli cited

The Hughenden Edition. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1881. Includes Alroy, Coningsby, Contarini Fleming, Endymion, Henrietta Temple, The Rise of Iskander, Sybil, Tancred, Venetia, Vivian Grey, and The Young Duke.

Disraeli's Reminiscences. Ed. Helen M. Swartz and Marvin Swartz. London, 1975.

General Preface to Collected Edition, 1870.

The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield. Vol.I, 1873-75. Ed. The Marquis of Zetland. London 1929.

Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography. London, 1852.

Lothair. Oxford English Novels Edition, ed. Vernon Bogdanor. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Preface to Coningsby, 1849.

Preface to Contarini Fleming, 1845.

Preface to Vivian Grey. Uniform Edition, 1853.

The Revolutionary Epick and Other Poems. Ed. W. Davenport Adams. London, 1904.

Vivian Grey. Young England Edition, ed. Bernard N. Langdon-Davies. London and Edinburgh: R. Brimley Johnson, 1904.

Whigs and Whiggism: Political Writings of Benjamin Disraeli. Ed. William Hutcheson. London, 1913.

The Young Duke. Centenary Edition, ed. Lucien Wolf. London: De La More Press, 1905.

II. Secondary Works cited

Allen, Walter. Introduction to Coningsby. London, 1948, pp.9-18.

Anon. "Ben D'Ymion. By the Author of Lofair," Punch, Vol.79, 4 Dec. 1880, pp.262-64; 18 Dec. 1880, pp.286-7.

Anon. "De Tankard of Benjamin Dizzyreally Esq.," in Walter Hamilton, ed., Parodies of the Works of English and American Authors. Vol.VI, London, 1889, pp.240-1.

Anon. [Review of Contarini Fleming,] New Monthly Magazine, Vol.35, 1832, pp.26-8. [Attributed to Bulwer Lytton.]

Anon. [Review of Endymion,] The Times, No.30,047, 24 Nov. 1880, p.10.

Anon. [Review of Endymion,] Dublin Review, Vol.88, 1880, pp. 145-65.

Anon. [Review of Endymion,] Fraser's Magazine, Vol.102 N.S.22, 1880, pp.705-20.

Anon. [Review of Henrietta Temple,] Edinburgh Review, Vol.LXVI, 1837, pp.59-72.

Anon. [Review of Lothair,] Dublin Review, Vol.67, 1870, pp.156-78.

Anon. [Review of Sybil,] Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine, Vol.1, 1845, pp.557-65.

Anon. [Review of Tancred,] The Christian Remembrancer, Vol.XIII, 1847, pp.514-37.

Anon. [Review of Vivian Grey,] London Magazine, Vol.VII N.S., 1827, pp.472-83.

Anon. [Review of Vivian Grey,] North American Review, Vol.25, 1827, pp.199-203.

Apjohn, Lewis. Memorable Men of the Nineteenth Century. II. The Earl of Beaconsfield: His Life and Work. London, 1881.

Arnold, Beth R. "Disraeli and Dickens on Young England," Dickensian, Vol.63, 1967, pp.26-31.

Arnold, W. [Review of The Young Duke,] The Athenaeum, No.183, 30 April 1831, pp.276-7.

Aydelotte, William O. "The England of Marx and Mill as Reflected in Fiction," Journal of Economic History, Vol.8, 1948, pp.42-58.

B., W.T. "Marmion Herbert," Notes and Queries, 5th Series II, No.35, 29 August 1874, pp.177.

Basch, Françoise. Relative Creatures: Victorian Women in Society and the Novel 1837-67, trans. A. Rudolf. London, 1974.

Berlin, Sir Isaiah. "Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx and the search for identity," The Jewish Historical Society Transactions, Vol.XXII, 1968-9, pp.1-21.

Bewley, Marius. "Towards Reading Disraeli," Prose, 1972, pp.5-23.

Beyers, Brian. "Novels and Politics," Contrast, Vol.8, 1973, pp.63-72.

Blake, Robert. "The Dating of 'Endymion,'" Review of English Studies, Vol.17 N.S., 1966, pp.177-82.

Blake, Robert. Disraeli. London, 1966.

Blake Robert. "Disraeli's Political Novels," History Today, Vol.XVI, 1966, pp.459-66.

Bloomfield, Paul. Disraeli, London, 1961.

Brandes, Georg. Lord Beaconsfield: A Study, trans. Mrs. George Sturge. London, 1880.

Brandl, A. "Zur Quelle von Disraeli's 'Alroy,'" Archiv für das Studium der neuren Sprachen und Literaturen, Vol.148, 1925. pp.97-8.

Brantlinger, Patrick. "The Case Against Trade Unions in Early Victorian Fiction," Victorian Studies, Vol. XIII, 1969, pp.37-52.

Brantlinger, Patrick. "Tory-Radicalism and 'The Two Nations' in Disraeli's Sybil," Victorian Newsletter, No.41, Spring 1972, pp.13-7.

Briggs, Asa. Victorian Cities. London, 1963.

Broughshane. "Nihilism in Russia (In imitation of Disraeli's Sybil)," in Walter Hamilton, ed., Parodies of the Works of English and American Authors. Vol.VI, London, 1889, pp.239-40.

Bryant, William Cullen. [Untitled review of Vivian Grey,] United States Review and Literary Gazette, I, 1826, pp.231-2.

Burrow, J.W., "The Sense of the Past," in Laurence Lerner, ed., The Victorians. London, 1978, pp.120-38.

Butler, Samuel. The Way of All Flesh. New York, 1950 [1903].

Cazamian, Louis. The Social Novel in England, 1830-50, trans. Martin Fido. London 1973. (Le roman social en Angleterre, 1830-1850, Paris, 1903.)

Cecil, Lord David. Early Victorian Novels. London, 1934.

Clarke, K.C., The Right Hon. Sir Edward. Benjamin Disraeli The Romance of a Great Career 1804-1881. London, 1926.

Cockshut, A.O.J. "Victorian Thought," in Arthur Pollard, ed., The Victorians. London, 1969, pp.13-40.

Cracroft, Bernard. "Mr. Disraeli, the novelist," Fortnightly Review, Vol.10, 1868, pp.146-59.

Cruickshank, R.J. Charles Dickens and Early Victorian England. London, 1949.

Dahl, Curtis. "History on the Hustings," in Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, eds., From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad. Minneapolis, 1958, pp.60-71.

Escott, T.H.S. "Political Novels," Fraser's Magazine, Vol.13 N.S., 1874, pp.520-536.

Faber, Richard. Beaconsfield and Bolingbroke. London, 1961.

Faber, Richard. Proper Stations: Class in Victorian Fiction. London, 1971.

Fido, Martin. "'From his own observation': Sources of Working Class Passages in Disraeli's Sybil," Modern Language Review, Vol.72, 1977, pp.268-84.

Fido, Martin. "The Treatment of Rural Distress in Disraeli's Sybil," Yearbook of English Studies, Vol5, 1975, pp.153-63.

Forbes-Boyd, Eric. "Disraeli the Novelist," Essays and Studies, Vol. III N.S., 1950, pp.100-17.

Frietzsche, Arthur. "The Monstrous Clever Young Man": The Novelist Disraeli and His Heroes. Logan, Utah, 1959.

Frietzsche, Arthur H. Disraeli's Religion: The Treatment of Religion in Disraeli's Novels. Logan, Utah, 1961.

Froude, J.A. The Earl of Beaconsfield. London, 1890.

Fuller, Melville W. "Beaconsfield's Novels," The Dial, Vol.I, 1881, pp.188-89.

Garnett, Richard. "Shelley and Lord Beaconsfield," in Essays of an Ex-Librarian. London, 1901, pp.101-25.

Gilbert, F. "The Germany of Contarini Fleming," Contemporary Review, Vol.149, 1936, pp.74-80.

Gilfillan, George. A Third Gallery of Portraits. Edinburgh, 1854.

Gosse, Edmund. Some Diversions of a Man of Letters. London, 1919.

Greg W.R. [Review of Sybil,] Westminster Review, Vol.XLIV, 1845, pp.141-52.

Guedalla, Philip. Idylls of the Queen. London, 1937.

Guiccioli, Countess [Teresa]. My Recollections of Lord Byron. London, 1869.

Guizot, François. "Moeurs politiques anglaises," Revue Française, Vol.I, 1828, pp.46-99.

Hackett, Francis. "Disraeli as a Novelist," New Republic, Vol. 135, 1956, pp.27-8.

Hamilton, Robert. "Disraeli and the Two Nations," Quarterly Review, Vol.288, 1950, pp.102-15.

Harris, Wendell V. "Fiction and Metaphysics in the Nineteenth Century," in The Novel and Its Changing Form, ed. R.G. Collins. Winnepeg, Canada, 1972, pp.59-72.

Harrison, F. "The Romance of the Peerage," Fortnightly Review, Vol.XIII, 1870, pp.654-67.

Hollis, Christopher. "Disraeli's Political Novels," in R.A. Butler and others, Tradition and Change: Nine Oxford Lectures. London: Conservative Political Centre, 1954, pp.98-117.

Holloway, John. The Victorian Sage. London, 1953.

Horsman, E.A. On the Side of the Angels? Disraeli and the Nineteenth Century Novel. Dunedin, N.Z., 1973.

Houghton, Lord. "Notes on Endymion," Fortnightly Review, Vol. 35, 1881, pp.66-76. See also Milnes.

Houghton, Walter E. The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870. New Haven, Conn., 1957.

Howe, Susanne. Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen. New York, 1930.

Hughes, Thomas. Tom Brown at Oxford. London, 1897 [1861].

Jackson, Holbrook. "Benjamin Disraeli," in Great English Novelists. London, 1909, pp.181-24.

James, Henry. "Lothair by Lord Beaconsfield," in Literary Reviews and Essays, ed. Albert Mordell. New York, 1957, pp.303-08.

Jeaffreson, J.C. "The Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli," in Novels and Novelists, Vol.II. London, 1858, pp.221-61.

Jerman, B.R. The Young Disraeli. London, 1960.

Jones, Annabel. "Disraeli's Endymion: a case study," in Asa Briggs, ed. Essays in the History of Publishing: Longman, 1724-1974. London, 1974, pp.141-86.

Kebbel, T.E. Life of Lord Beaconsfield. London, 1888.

Langdon-Davies, B.N. General Introduction to Young England Edition, pp.xi-xii of each volume.

Langdon-Davies, B.N. Introduction to Coningsby, Young England Edition. London, 1904, pp.xv-xliv.

Langdon-Davies, B.N. Introduction to Sybil, Young England Edition. London, 1904, pp.xv-xli.

Langdon-Davies, B.N. Introduction to Tancred, Young England Edition. London, 1904, pp. xv-xlii.

Leavis, F.R. The Great Tradition. London, 1948.

Levine, Richard A. Benjamin Disraeli. New York, 1968.

Levine, R.A. "Disraeli's 'Tancred' and 'The Great Asian Mystery,'" Nineteenth Century Fiction, Vol.22, 1967, pp.71-85.

Lewis, Clyde J. "Theory and Expediency in the Policy of Disraeli," Victorian Studies, Vol.IV, 1961, pp.237-58.

Lord, William Frewen. "Lord Beaconsfield's Novels," The Nineteenth Century, Vol.XLV, 1899, pp.245-61.

Lucas, John. "Mrs. Gaskell and Brotherhood," In D. Howard, J. Lucas, J. Goode, Tradition and Tolerance in Nineteenth Century Fiction. London, 1966, pp.141-205.

Lytton, Bulwer. England and the English. London, 1833

Lytton. The Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, By His Son. Vol.II, London, 1883.

McCabe, Bernard. "Disraeli and the 'Baronial Principle': Some Versions of Romantic Medievalism," Victorian Newsletter, No.34, Fall 1968, pp.7-13.

MacCarthy, John. [Review of Endymion,] American Catholic Quarterly Review, Vol.6, 1881, pp.112-31.

Maitre, Raymond. Disraeli homme de lettres La personnalité la pensée l'oeuvre littéraire. Paris, 1963.

Maurois, André. Disraeli: A Picture of the Victorian Age, trans. Hamish Miles. London, 1927.

Merritt, James D. "Disraeli as a Byronic Poet," Victorian Poetry, Vol.III, 1965, pp.138-9.

Merritt, James D. "The Novelist St. Barbe in Disraeli's 'Endymion,' Revenge on Whom?" Nineteenth Century Fiction, Vol.23, 1968, pp.85-8.

Meynell, Wilfrid. Disraeli. 2 Vols. London, 1903.

Milnes, Richard Monckton. [Review of Tancred,] Edinburgh Review, Vol. LXXXVI, 1847, pp.138-55. See also Lord Houghton.

Minto, W. "Mrs. Gaskell's Novels," Fortnightly Review, Vol.24 N.S., 1878, pp.353-69.

Mitchell, Paul. "The Initiation Motif in Benjamin Disraeli's Coningsby," Southern Quarterly, Vol.10, 1971, pp.223-30.

Modder, M.F. "The Alien Patriot in Disraeli's Novels," London Quarterly and Holborn Review, Vol.159, 1934, pp.363-72.

Modder, M.F. The Jew in the Literature of England. Philadelphia, 1939.

Moers, Ellen. The Dandy: Brummel to Beerbohm. London, 1960.

Monypenny, William Flavelle, and Buckle, George Earle. The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. 2 Vols. London, 1929 [1910-20].

Nickerson, Charles C. "Benjamin Disraeli's Contarini Fleming and Alroy," Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries, Vol.39, 1977, pp.72-97.

Nickerson, Charles C. "Disraeli, Lockhart and Murray: An Episode in the History of the 'Quarterly Review,'" Victorian Studies, Vol.XV, 1972, pp.279-306.

O'Kell, Robert. "The Autobiographical Nature of Disraeli's Early Fiction," Nineteenth Century Fiction, Vol.31, 1976, pp.253-84.

Painting, David E. "Disraeli and Roman Catholicism," Quarterly Review, Vol.304, 1966, pp.17-25.

Philipson, Rabbi David. The Jew in English Fiction. Cincinnati, 1889.

Pollard, Arthur. "The Novels of Mrs. Gaskell," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Vol.XLIII, 1961, pp.403-25.

Ray, Gordon N., ed. William Makepeace Thackeray: Contributions to the Morning Chronicle. Urbana, Ill., 1955.

Rieff, Philip. "Disraeli: The Chosen of History," Commentary, Vol.13, 1952, pp.22-33.

Roberts, J.M. The Mythology of the Secret Societies. London, 1972.

Robson, J.M. "'Home Letters' and Disraeli," Proceedings of the Disraeli Colloquium, 22 and 23 April 1978, pp.47-79. Supplement to Disraeli Newsletter (Spring 1979).

Rosa, M.W. The Silver-Fork School, Novels of Fashion Preceding "Vanity Fair." New York, 1936.

Roth, Cecil. Benjamin Disraeli: Earl of Beaconsfield. New York, 1952.

Samuel, H.B. "Two Dandy Novels, Vivian Grey and Pelham," Academy and Literature, Vol.67, 1904, pp.316-7.

Scherer, Edmond. Essays on English Literature, trans. G. Saintsbury. London, 1891.

Schwarz, Daniel R. "Art and Argument in Disraeli's Sybil," Journal of Narrative Technique, Vol.4, 1974, pp.19-31.

Schwarz, Daniel R. "Progressive Dubiety: The Discontinuity of Disraeli's Political Trilogy," Victorian Newsletter, No.47, Spring 1975, pp.12-19.

Sichel, Walter. Disraeli: A Study in Personality and Ideas. London, 1904.

Sichel, Walter. "Lord Beaconsfield as a Landscape Painter," Time, Vol.7 N.S., 1888, pp.533-42.

Smith, Sheila M., "Mid-Victorian Novelists," in Arthur Pollard, ed., The Victorians, London, 1969, pp.196-230.

Smith, Sheila M. Mr. Disraeli's Readers. Nottingham, 1966.

Smith, Sheila M. "Truth and Propaganda in the Victorian Social Novel," Renaissance and Modern Studies, Vol.VIII, 1964, pp.75-92.

Smith, Sheila M. "Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence," Review of English Studies, Vol.XIII N.S., 1962, pp.368-84.

Speare, Morris Edmund. The Political Novel, Its Development in England and America. New York, 1966 [1924].

Stephen, Leslie. "Disraeli's Novels," Hours in a Library, New Edition, Vol.II. London, 1892, pp.106-40.

Stewart, R.W. Benjamin Disraeli: A List of writings by him, and writings about him, with notes. Metuchen, N.J., 1972.

Stewart, R.W., ed. Disraeli's Novels Reviewed 1826-1968. Metuchen, N.J., 1975.

Sultana, Donald. Benjamin Disraeli in Spain, Malta and Albania 1830-2: A Monograph. London, 1976.

Tillotson, Kathleen. Novels of the Eighteen-Forties. London, 1961 [1954].

Traill, H.D. Introduction to Sybil. London, 1895.

Traill, H.D. The New Fiction and Other Essays on Literary Subjects. London, 1897.